THE ROAD TO ALLAH

Selected Discourses of Hazrat Hakeemul Ummat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi

(May Allah illuminate his resting place)

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FOREWORD

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaih) does not need any introduction. He was very aptly conferred the title of 'Hakeemul Ummat' which means: the Physician of the Ummah. His bayaans are a living testimony to his expertise and profound insight into treating spiritual sicknesses – sicknesses pertaining to the moral and religious degeneration of Muslims. And the words of advice proffered by this illustrious Aalim of the Deen still remain the panacea for all those who wish to reform their lives and journey the spiritual realm to gain the proximity and special love of Allah Subhaanahu Wa Ta'ala.

Hakeem also means 'sage'. The wise words and sagacious advice Moulana Thanwi offers in his bayaans which were purely inspirational have helped millions of Muslims over the decades.

In the Subcontinent there has not been an Aalim whose talks have been recorded by pen as much as Hazrat Thanwi's. Allah Ta'ala made the arrangements for the bayaans of this Mujaddid of the 13th century to be recorded and preserved for posterity.

It is therefore our good fortune to present here a selection of extracts from these Mawaa'iz. Remember that the full benefit from these extracts will only be gained when one considers oneself to be spiritually sick and morally degenerate, and in search of the cure for one's moral and spiritual ailments.

Reflect and reflect well over the bayaans and change one's life accordingly.

May Allah Ta'ala accept us among His close servants, Aameen.
(Translator)

8 Ramadhaanul Mubaarak 1435/ 6 July 2014

WHO IS A TRUE MOULANA AND A TRUE AALIM?

- Moulana is a person who knows the Ahkaam (Commandments of Allah Ta'ala), not one who merely is versed with the Arabic language. Abu Jahl also knew the Arabic language, but his title was 'Abu Jahl' – the Father of Ignorance. He was not called 'Aalim'.

- A Moulana is an Aalim who practises upon his knowledge. You may call him *Sufi* if you wish. We do not regard a person who does not practise on his knowledge to be a Moulana. Merely being able to speak the Arabic language does not qualify one to be a Moulana. In Egypt and Beirut you will find Christians fluently speaking the Arabic language. So, must we take them to be Ulama in our Deen?

- A Moulana is one who is attached to his *Maula* – his Master – Allah Ta'ala. He possesses knowledge of the Deen and he is a Muttaqi (repository of Taqwa). He bears Akhlaaq-e-Hameedah (Praiseworthy Character), such as Fear for Allah Ta'ala, etc.

- A man does not become a Moulana by virtue of expertise in the Arabic language, regardless of being an orator or writer in the Arabic language because Abu Jahl was also an expert in the Arabic language. In fact, the Arabic orators of today can hardly be compared to Abu Jahl in Arabic speech. He should thus be an expert Aalim, whereas his title was 'Abu Jahl' (the Crown of Ignorance). This shows that being versed in the Arabic language only, does not qualify one to become a Moulana.

- An Aalim is an adherent of the Sunnah.

- The word Moulana is related to *Maula*. A Maulana is thus a *Maula Wala*, that is, an Allah Wala – a Friend of Allah Ta'ala. As long as he is a Friend of Allah Ta'ala he is a Moulana and qualified to be taken as a guide in Deen. And when he changes his colours then he is at once stripped of his title, Moulana and he is not worthy of being followed. His association should be abandoned.

- For one to become an Aalim, Ilm is a preliminary requisite whilst fear for Allah Ta'ala is a vital condition. This divine fear cannot be acquired without Ilm, however, it does not follow that fear for Allah Ta'ala is a necessary corollary of Ilm. Ilm does not necessarily produce this fear. For fear of Allah Ta'ala there is the need for a separate effort (which is to practise upon the knowledge one has gained).

- Some moulanas are jaahils (ignoramuses). In fact, one should rather say that some jaahils are moulanas. A true Moulana is he who is a Friend of Allah Ta'ala and this is achieved by adhering to the Shariah. But the sad state of affairs today is that a person is crowned with the title of 'moulana' by merely studying a few books on Arabic.

- If one becomes a Moulana just by studying Arabic literature, being fluent in Arabic speech, and possessing skill in writing in the Arabic language then Abu Jahl and Abu Lahb deserve to be leading Moulanas in view of them being masters of the Arabic language.

DIAGNOSING AND TREATING OUR SICKNESS OF SINNING

Allah Ta'ala declares in the Glorious Qur'aan:

"And do not become like those who forgot about Allah. In consequence, He (Allah Ta'ala) made them forget about themselves. These are the transgressors." (Surah Hashr, 19)

In this gracious Aayat of the Qur'aan-e-Kareem Allah Ta'ala provides the remedy for our degenerate state. All of us are in a degenerate state; some in a sever condition whilst others are in a lesser state of spiritual relapse.

Our Degenerate State

Our degenerate state is on account of our sin and transgression of the Laws of Allah Ta'ala. Sinning on our part is sometimes intentional and sometimes unintentional. Those who sin intentionally again sometimes do so out of weakness. For example, a person casts evil glances at the opposite sex. This person does so either because his inner passion or his nafs gets the better of him/her, or he/she may do so with total disregard for the Law of Allah Ta'ala which states that a male should not look at a female and a female should not look at a male. The latter, i.e. committing a sin in total disregard for the Law of Allah Ta'ala is a severe case. It is open transgression and rebellion against the Law of Allah Ta'ala. Even worse than that, is the condition of considering sin to be halaal. In other words,

considering halaal what is haraam. This is kufr and it is typical of the kuffaar.

We are not addressing kuffaar here. We are speaking to the Mu-mineen, and as a Mu-min a person will consider sin to be sin and haraam, although one may succumb to the temptations of the nafs and indulge in the sin. Nevertheless, we all do commit sins knowingly or unknowingly as none of us are *ma'soom* or sinless like the Ambiya (Alaihimus Salaam). Since we are all sinners of varying degrees and thus spiritually sick, this Aayat is addressed to us and shows us how to treat ourselves.

The Diagnosis

A sick person should firstly have his sickness diagnosed. The sickness should be ascertained then the treatment can be prescribed. Without knowing the cause of the sickness it is not possible to cure oneself. In exactly the same manner, we should ascertain the cause of our degenerate spiritual state; the cause of our sinning and transgressing the Laws of Allah Ta'ala.

Allah Ta'ala has mentioned in the Aayat cited above the reason for our transgression. He states: ***"And do not become like those who forgot about Allah."*** We are cautioned not to become like those who are forgetful of Allah Ta'ala. Further, Allah Ta'ala states that, ***"these are the transgressors."*** In other words those who forget about Allah Ta'ala are the sinners and transgressors. Forgetting about Allah Ta'ala is the cause of sinning.

And becoming forgetful of Allah Ta'ala is so harmful and bad that it leads to a person becoming forgetful of himself. Allah Ta'ala states: ***"And do not become like those who forgot about***

Allah. In consequence, He (Allah Ta'ala) made them forget about themselves."

When a person indulges in sin and vice he forgets about himself. He does not care about himself. He gives in to his base desires and in consequence he loses his self-respect. You may have observed two people arguing. They become abusive. At that time they are trapped in rage and thus totally oblivious of Allah Ta'ala. Now they become abusive and utter filthy and gutter language, no matter who may be around and no matter what the consequences may be. They care not for the consequences of their actions, although they become ashamed afterwards. But in the heat of the moment when they have lost control of their tempers they utter any filthy and vile word, disgracing themselves and bringing shame to their close ones. They forget about Allah Ta'ala and thus they become forgetful about themselves. They harm themselves not realizing what damage they are doing to themselves.

A person indulges in gambling. He is totally oblivious of Allah Ta'ala. In his insane pursuit and greed for money he bets and bets, gambles and gambles to a point where he even bets away his wife. There are cases where people have even betted away their wives and killed their wives through gambling. They lost their mental equilibrium. This is the warning which Allah Ta'ala sounded in the Qur'aan-e-Hakeem; of us becoming forgetful of ourselves and harming ourselves severely by becoming forgetful of Allah Ta'ala.

The Treatment

We have understood the harm and gravity of this condition of becoming forgetful of Allah Ta'ala. This is the diagnosis to our degenerate state. We, therefore, have to seek a cure for this sickness with which we are suffering. Now the treatment for this spiritual sickness will be the opposite. If a person is feeling cold he will be given warmth. If the throat is dry, water will be administered. If a person is tired he will be told to rest. Similarly, since the course of our degenerate state is forgetting about Allah Ta'ala it follows that the remedy is to remember Allah Ta'ala. Remembering is the opposite of forgetting. Thus the cure for our degenerate state is to remember Allah Ta'ala. Insha-Allah, by remembering Allah Ta'ala we will then not become forgetful of ourselves and thus not harm ourselves spiritually and even physically and mundanely.

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaih) has offered this following wonderful treatment program for our forgetting Allah Ta'ala which results in our sinning and wrongdoing. He says that we may not be able to abandon all the sins we are committing at once. But, by following this simple treatment we will be cured of our sinning Insha-Allah.

The treatment is as follows: Take out some time every day and go into solitude. In this solitude spend time making the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala. Direct one's attention to this Zikr. Do not start thinking about anything other than the Zikr. And the most beneficial of Zikr during this time is a short formula repeated over and over again, such as *Laa Ilaaha Illallah*, or *Allahu Allah*.

The effect of this Zikr is that one will develop an aversion for sinning. And even if one sins thereafter, continue the program of Zikr. One will feel ashamed at taking the Sacred Name of Allah and thereafter indulging in sin. This shame will induce one to forsake sin and transgression.

This is a tried and tested remedy. Devote a little time daily, be it five minutes or ten minutes or twenty minutes, and peacefully engage in the verbal remembrance of Allah Ta'ala. You will find your heart becoming attracted to Allah. Your bond and love for Allah Ta'ala will intensify and you will sense a strong aversion for sin, as sin is a barrier of steel between a person and the love of Allah Ta'ala. May Allah Ta'ala grant us all His love which is developed and strengthened through His Zikr and Ibaadat.

ZULM

Allah Ta'ala declares:

"Indicted are those who oppress others and are haughty on earth." (Surah Shurah)

Committing Oppression is Haraam

The purport of this Aayat is to warn over committing oppression when extracting revenge. However, it also alludes to starting oppression. Thus the Aayat covers oppression irrespective of it being retaliatory or introductory, for the words of the Aayat are of general import. In fact, the prohibition of oppression can be readily understood from the Aayat in spite of the context of the Aayat being oppressing in retaliation. If it is haraam to oppress

even in retaliation then to a greater degree is it haraam to commit unprovoked oppression.

When retaliating, a person is overcome with anger on account of the zulm (oppression) committed by the other party. In this frenzy the chances of overstepping the limits of revenge are not remote. In fact, it is only a man of valour who will observe the limits in such circumstances. Now when there is no permission to commit oppression in an excusable situation then how can it be permitted to be oppressive where one has no reason or justification? Thus, the Aayat's purport covers introductory oppression as well.

The Root of Oppression

Then Allah Ta'ala states***: "...and they are haughty and rebellious on earth."*** This additional clause is to point out that the root and cause of oppression is haughtiness. It is for this reason that we find one reason for the disregard of the rights of others being the erroneous notion of rights being due solely on account of honour. People fulfil the rights of one whose honour is accepted whilst disregard the rights of one who holds no position and honour in their hearts. Having no honour in the heart for someone is synonymous to thinking of that person to be inferior to one; and this is the gist of haughtiness which Allah Ta'ala speaks of in this Aayat, ***"they are haughty".***

The Treatment

Haughtiness is reproachable. Intelligence and norm accept this fact. Therefore, it has to be treated. Further in the Aayat Allah Ta'ala mentions the treatment, ***"on earth".***

The teachings of Allah Ta'ala are wonderful. He outlines the sickness and provides the cure as well. Reflecting over the entire Qur'aan will reveal that where a sickness is mentioned the cure is also to be found there.

Even in this world Allah Ta'ala has implemented this pattern. Where something is harmful, the remedy is found nearby. One explorer writes that there is a type of poisonous grass which inflicts pain similar to the sting of a scorpion. However, close by is another grass which is the antidote to the sting. By external application of this grass the pain caused by the first type of grass immediately subsides.

Similarly, the treatment of haughtiness is stated here, ***"on the earth".*** The gist of this is that your haughtiness is astonishing considering you live on earth and have been created from it. Ponder a little! What is your origin? Your origin is this earth and sand upon which humans and animals walk and move about, urinate and defecate. This is from what you have been created. You should therefore have shame in you.

At another place in the Qur'aan Allah Ta'ala draws our attention to this by saying: ***"From it [earth/soil] We have created you, to it We will return you and from it We will extract you for a second time".*** Here, too, we are taught to meditate about our origin being the earth. We have been created from the soil of the earth to which we will return when we die and decompose into dust. What then prompts us to display haughtiness?

This is truly a wonderful treatment for haughtiness. We should therefore utilize it by meditating on the condition of the soil of the earth. Shaikh Saa'di (Rahmatullahi alaih) says:

"Allah Ta'ala created you from the land. So, O Servant of Allah, be humble like sand"

Alas! Our origin is under everyone's feet whilst we wish to propel ourselves into the sky. All these airs are only as long as we bask in the favours of Allah Ta'ala. Let just one favour be snatched away and our airs will be reduced to dust. Look at a mentally handicapped person. What does he lack that he is not considered a normal human being? His mind is impaired. Just look, then, at the consequence.

A friend suffered a stroke. He was a distinguished Aalim. The stroke completely wiped out whatever he knew. He even forgot Surah Faatiha. After recovering he was taught like a child *Alhamdu Lillaahi Rabbil Aalameen.* His brother became so happy at his recovery that he distributed sweetmeats. Now what makes man haughty? Everything is going to be reduced to dust. ***"…on earth"*** draws our attention to this – living on this earth and you are haughty? Don't you have any shame?

You Have No Right to be Arrogant

Thereafter, Allah Ta'ala states: ***"… without right."*** This conditions oppression and haughtiness as oppression and haughtiness are invariably without right and unjust. Here it is unequivocally stated that you have no right to oppress and be haughty. Then why do you commit this unjust oppression?

There was no real need to mention this (the condition of 'without right'), however, it was clearly stated owing to some people labouring under the misconception that they have the right to display arrogance in view of their standing. They are told plainly that, Allah created you from the earth and commanded you to live on earth. Don't project yourself into the sky.

The Sentence for Oppression

The sentence of the crime is then passed. Judgement passed over those indicted for oppression is: ***"These people are sentenced to a painful punishment."*** Dear Friends! This matter of oppression is so grave that as long as the oppressed does not pardon the crime, Allah Ta'ala will not forgive the crime. Allah Ta'ala forgives His right, but in so far as the rights of His servants are concerned as long as they do not pardon the wrong inflicted upon them He will not forgive the oppressor. This is the gravity of the case.

Sultan Mahmood Ghaznawi was a very just and intrepid king. Once, he saw in a dream a magnificent palace in Jannat. He asked the Angels who the palace belonged to. "To Mahmood Ghaznawi," they replied. "In that case allow me to enter and view my palace," he said. The Angels replied: "No, not yet. Permission is withheld for there is a case against you. If you are acquitted then you may enter. "What is the charge against me," he asked? The Angels pointed out to a whip hanging on a wall. "You whipped a worker with that. Your entry into Jannat is prevented pending the discharge of the right you owe the worker."

Hearing this, Mahmood (Rahmatullahi alaih) trembled with fear. His eyes opened due to being horrified. Till dawn he turned sides in anxiety. When morning came he called the worker and placed the whip in front of the worker saying: “Here, take this and whip me as much as you please.” Furthermore, he pleaded with the worker to extract revenge otherwise he (Sultan Mahmood) will be deprived of Jannat.

The worker said: “O King! One zulm was that which you inflicted upon me; now this greater zulm by telling me to take revenge!” The worker fell at the feet of the king and said: “I have forgiven His Majesty! Rest assured that I have no claim against you.” Still Mahmood was not at ease. He conferred a load of gifts to the worker who became delighted. Then only did Mahmood become restful.

Dear Friends! This zulm is not a trivial matter. All Ibaadaat are insufficient as long as one is not exonerated of zulm. (From *Khairul Irshaad Li Huqooqil Ibaad* by Hazrat Moulana Thanwi Rahmatullahi Alaih)

TAFWEEZ

No Greater Source of Comfort

I wish to tell you something now which will make your worry enjoyable. I have already said that worry will never cease before entry into Jannat. Yes it is possible for worry to become enjoyable. This, too, is sort of cessation of worry. So I wish to put forward something which will be useful in all our actions, which will ward off negligence and at the time of worry one’s

determination will be fortified. It is not something new. It is that same thing which is called in the Qur'aan at certain places *Taqwa* (piety), at certain places *I'tisaam Bihablillah* (holding onto the Rope or Deen of Allah) and it is also called *Zikr-e-Ni'mat* (Remembrance of the favours of Allah).

What I wish to draw attention to now is Islam, which as is obvious, encompasses all those concepts. But I will speak of Islam in another way, which very few people have observed and hence when we say, 'Islam' then the mind does not think about it. The reason for this is that the word 'Islam' is so common that its everyday sense is readily understood. Its purport, however, is not considered by anyone. If people just consider the literal meaning of Islam then they will be closer to the reality of Islam, which I wish to speak about today.

Listen! Islam literally means: to surrender. This is also called *Tasleem* (to accept) and this is what I wish to speak about now. The Soofiyah have termed this, *Tafweez*. This is the reality of Islam.

In the Qur'aan Islam is interpreted as *Islam-e-Wajh* which broadly speaking does not mean Salaat and Saum. Rather, it means *Tafweez*, i.e. to surrender oneself to Allah and to brace for every Act of Allah Ta'ala; whatever He wishes He can carry out, whatever order He gives is accepted. Namaaz and Roza are elements of this *Tafweez*, but they are not the whole make-up of it.

Allah Ta'ala says: ***"O those who have Imaan! Fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die but with Islam."*** Here

Allah Ta'ala intends that we should be constant on Islam, i.e. we should embrace *Tafweez*. We should not leave our grip of it for one moment. This is what I had earlier stated which makes worries enjoyable. But the enjoyment may not be as sweets and sweet dishes. Rather, its pleasure is like strong tasting savouries. One who is in the habit of eating strong foods understands this well. Hence the Aarifeen (those Buzrugs who recognise that everything is from Allah) are afflicted with all types of difficulties and pain but they find enjoyment in these difficulties. They understand that whatever The Beloved gives is pleasing and acceptable even though it may not appeal to one naturally. They place their desires at the altar of The Beloved's desire.

Thus, do not think that after *Tafweez* one will not become worried or not be faced with irritating circumstances. Yes, there will be this difference that previously you used to become unhappy whereas now you will take it in your stride, just as one who loves strong foods enjoys himself with the burning chillies. Tears may flow from his eyes but he relishes the food.

In short, *Tafweez* is required in everything, be it a worldly matter or a Deeni matter. The Awliya utilize it from the outset whilst the people of the dunya adopt it afterwards. It does not mean that one should abandon strategy. Adopting a strategy and plan of action are not nugatory of *Tafweez*. Adopting a plan of action is also commanded by that Being whose Right demands *Tafweez*. Thus a person should adopt a course of action but leave the result to Allah Ta'ala. One should not formulate one's own result. One's attitude should be: Whatever He is happy with I am happy with.

The one who adopts *Tafweez* sets his sights from the beginning on Allah Ta'ala and adopts a course of action solely because of following the Sunnat and out of obedience unto Allah Ta'ala. His intention is never that the action must bear fruits. He leaves his success or failure in the Hands of Allah Ta'ala. He strives whether he is successful or unsuccessful. In all cases he is happy. A person who only thinks of success through his efforts will find his problems and worry endless. If he is faced with some problem or something against his grain he will grieve over his failure, whereas in *Tafweez* there is comfort.

There is no greater source of comfort in this world than *Tafweez*. You will search and search till you are dead-tired, but you won't find anything in this world which is more comforting than *Tafweez*. Once, Hazrat Ibraheem bin Ad'ham missed his Tahajjud Namaaz. He was saddened by this. The following night he tried hard to stay awake but late during the night he was overcome with such sleep that his Fajr Namaaz also became Qaza. Now he became extremely uneasy and worried. He received Divine Inspiration: *"O Ibraheem! You have seen the result of your plans, now adopt Tafweez. Sleep when We want you to sleep and stand for Salaah when We want you to stand for Salaah."* Hazrat Ibraheem (Rahmatullahi alaih) says: *"I adopted Tafweez and found inner comfort."*

I saw a person who was an Aalim as well as a civil servant. After he retired he wished to devote himself to the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala and spend his time in solitude. Behold the Qudrat of Allah Ta'ala! After commencing his Zikr and shaghl (a programme of spiritual-upliftment) his two sons lost their sanity. He was demoralized. Now he was occupied with looking after them. All his solitude and peace of mind were shattered. Some days he

could not even engage in Zikr. But an Aarif is not disturbed in even this case because an Aarif does not decide for himself. As long as Allah Ta'ala keeps him in solitude he stays in solitude. And when Allah Ta'ala wants him to emerge from his seclusion then he is contented with it.

The actual goal is Allah Ta'ala's pleasure. Just as that is gained in solitude, sometimes it is in service to creation. Did that person not perhaps gain *thawaab* in caring for his two sons who became insane? Off course he would have gained. In such a scenario his anxiety was the means for his elevation. At such a time peace of mind in seclusion would not have been beneficial to him. In fact, the *thawaab* received for looking after sick or mentally handicapped offspring is greater than making Zikr in seclusion. Why the worry then?

Bear in mind that worry revolves around having a mirage set for oneself and for one's family. We all are caught up in this sickness. We cherish distant hopes. But when our hopes do not materialize then we are struck with anxiety and grief. Had we not decided on our fate, we would have never been overcome with worry. The Awliya-Ullah enjoy the most comfort and peace of mind. They are not afflicted with worry and remorse at anything because they have not decided a set condition for themselves. In fact, they happily and totally surrender themselves to the Will of Allah Ta'ala. This is *Tafweez* and this is what Islam is all about. This *Tafweez* is instructed in the Aayat: ***"…and do not die but as Muslims."*** (Surah Aali Imraan, 102)

IETHAAR (SELF-ABNEGATION)

In the Qur'aan-e-Kareem Allah Ta'ala praises a certain Sahaabi and his wife for their self-abnegation. Self-abnegation is the attribute of forsaking one's own right or preference for the right or preference of another. In the Shariah this is termed as *Iethaar*. The relevant Aayat in this regard states:

"And they give preference [to others] over themselves in spite of them being needy." (Surah Hashr, 9)

Some visitors came to meet Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) asked the Sahaabah, who among them will host the visitors? Several Sahaabah were keen to host them. Each visitor was taken by one Sahaabi to his home. Hazrat Abu Talha (Radhiyallahu anhu) was also among those who offered to share the duty of hosting the visitors. He took along to his home the visitor entrusted to him. However, at home there was not sufficient food for him, his wife and the visitor. He told his wife to prepare the food and to blow off the lamp when the food was laid down. In the dark, without additional oil for the lamp, he would pretend to be eating with the visitor.

The wife was also a *waliyyah* who did not complain. She understood. When Hazrat Abu Talha and the guest started eating the light was extinguished. Hazrat Abu Talha (Radhiyallahu anhu) bade the guest to continue eating as they did not have oil for reigniting the lamp. The guest ate to his fill whilst Hazrat Abu Talha pretended to be eating. All the food was eaten up. That night Hazrat Abu Talha and his wife, Umme Sulaim

(Radhiyallahu anhum) went to sleep without supper and hungry. But they were contented as they had seen to the needs of the guest of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) whom they loved dearer than themselves and dearer than anyone else in the world.

The next morning when Hazrat Abu Talha came to Rasoolullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) he found Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) beaming. Wahi had come down in the form of Gracious Verses of the Qur'aan extolling the virtue of the action of Hazrat Abu Talha and his wife (Radhiyallahu anhuma). They had given preference to the right of the guest over themselves. Their attribute of *Iethaar* or self-abnegation was praised with glowing terms in the Qur'aan-e-Kareem.

Iethaar is part of the Akhlaaq of a Mu-min. The earliest Muslims – the illustrious Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum) – were paragons of *Iethaar*. Once, during a battle a Sahaabi heard the cry of a brother Muslim for water. The Sahaabi crying out for water was in the throes of death on the battlefield. Just as the Sahaabi was about to administer water to the dying Sahaabi they heard a call for water from another Sahaabi who had also fallen in battle. The Sahaabi who was about to drink stopped and gestured to the Sahaabi who had the water to firstly give the other dying Muslim water to drink. The water carrier rushed to the other Sahaabi who was calling for water. But just as this Sahaabi was about to drink, yet another call for water was heard. This Sahaabi also refused to drink and sent the Sahaabi who had the water to the third caller. The Sahaabi rushed to that person. Seven times this happened. Each time, a dying Sahaabi who was about to have his last drink of water on earth, heard a voice

crying for water from another dying Muslim and sent the water to his dying brother.

When the Sahaabi reached the seventh caller he found that he passed away. The Sahaabi with the water rushed back to the previous Sahaabi only to see that he, too, had passed away. In panic he ran to the previous caller, only to find this one also *shaheed*. In this way all seven drank from the Cup of Martyrdom without having that last drink of water. All had sacrificed their comfort for the comfort of their brethren. They had displayed unique self-abnegation even during the last moments of their lives.

The Awliya of former times bore the hallmark of *Iethaar*. Once, Hazrat Shah Abdur Raheem Saheb who is the father of Shah Waliyullah Dehlwi – the patriarch of the Ulama of Deoband – was walking on a narrow stretch of road. To the right and left was a marsh. Whilst walking on this narrow path, from the opposite side a dog came. Both came face-to-face. Both could not pass by at the same time. One had to get down into the marsh. They both stared at each other. By way of *karaamat* they started conversing.

Shah Abdur Raheem: Friend! Get down so that I can move along.

Dog: Why must I get down into the mud? What makes you more distinguished than me? Alas! Buzrugs of former times had *Iethaar* in them, whilst Buzrugs of today adopt *Ikhtiyaar* (i.e. they are given to self-regard).

Shah Abdur Raheem: No! That is not the case. You are mistaken. I am telling you to go down because you are not obligated to

keep yourself paak (clean) and perform Salaat. If you get muddy and napaak (impure) you will soon become dry and clean. If, however, I get soiled and my clothes get soiled then I will have to wash myself and my clothes thoroughly to regain tahaarat (purification). That may delay my Salaat.

Dog: Fine. I have no problem in this, but remember that if you get into the mud you can wash yourself and your clothes with a bucket or two of water. On the other hand, if I get into the mud whilst you consider yourself holier than me, then your heart will not be purified of the dirt (i.e. the pride) in it even with all the water from the seven seas.

When Hazrat Shah Abdur Raheem Saheb heard this he went into a spiritual frenzy and immediately jumped into the dirty marsh allowing the dog to pass through. He then expressed his deep gratitude unto Allah Ta'ala for conferring to him such a wealth of guidance and knowledge, thus saving him from spiritual ruin.

This is *Iethaar* which is encouraged, and at times waajib, provided that it does not cause oneself or one's family unbearable difficulty. In a situation like that of Hazrat Abu Talha (Radhiyallahu anhu), if by leaving all the food for the visitor one will suffer unbearable hunger or one's children will have to endure hunger then it will not be permissible to exercise *Iethaar*.

There are many scenarios which require expert guidance to understand the category of the *Iethaar*. And, that guidance can be acquired from the Ulama Raasikheen (Expert Ulama) and the Mashaaikh of Tasawwuf. May Allah Ta'ala strengthen our Imaan and adorn us with noble character amongst which *Iethaar* has always been pivotal in good character. And the significance

of good character can be adequately understood by the Hadeeth of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) declaring good character as the weightiest of virtues on the Pan of the Scale of Deeds in Qiyaamat.

THOSE "LITTLE" MUSTAHAB ACTS

In a Hadeeth-e-Qudsi Allah Ta'ala says:

"My servant continually gains closeness to Me by virtue of Nafl Acts until I reserve [special] love for him." (Bukhari)

Why Mustahab Acts are Necessary

We all do realize that the status of Fardh is the loftiest. Then comes the stage of Waajib acts, followed by Sunnat-e-Mu-akkaddah practices and then Mustahab Acts which are also termed as Nawaafil and Sunnat-e-Ghair Mu-akkadah. We all know that Mustahab acts are not waajib or obligatory in practice. However, we propose to discuss why Mustahab Acts are necessary from another angle, albeit not the Fiqhi angle.

Our complacency in regard to Mustahab acts stems from our ignorance of the innumerable benefits and blessings of Mustahab acts. If one realizes the benefits and blessings which a minute Mustahab act carries one will confess to being at such a loss till now for being unaware of these precious pearls.

The lover is in search of everything which makes his beloved happy. When he comes to know that my beloved loves certain

acts, he strives to render those acts. He does not want to leave out the slightest act which his beloved enjoys and is happy about. If we develop this nature of Love for Allah Ta'ala then we will appreciate these mustahab acts. We will understand the bayaan of these mustahab deeds to be the Rahmat of Allah Ta'ala and the compassion of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) for they have mentioned these acts which bring about the Pleasure Allah Ta'ala, in much detail.

If only necessary acts were mentioned in the Shariah, those who have intense love for Allah Ta'ala would have been extremely disconcerted. The reason for this is that a lover does not make do with only compulsory duties. The lover does understand compulsory duties to be obligatory upon himself. He wishes to go further and carry out those acts which will make the beloved turn to him even more.

The Example of a Master and Two Workers

Consider the example of two workers. One is merely an employee who is working for the money. He satisfies himself with carrying out only what he is instructed to do. He has no desire to do anything over and above what is necessary for him to do. Another worker is one whom you raised from childhood and hence he has a special bond with you. He is not working just for a salary. He will not suffice with only what he is instructed to do. In fact, he strives to do whatever he knows pleases the master. His mind is not on working hours. He is not upset or reluctant to do anything after hours. In fact, he is too happy to serve his master at any time during the day and night for he has a special bond of love with his master. Is there no difference

between these two workers? There is indeed a huge difference between the two.

Let us be honest with ourselves and consider our bond with Allah Ta'ala. Why do we only gratify ourselves with Fardh and Waajib? If we had intense love for Allah Ta'ala; if we considered our lives for the sake of Allah Ta'ala we would never have stopped short of the Mustahab Acts. In fact, we would have been on the lookout for Mustahab deeds to carry out. Knowing that Allah Ta'ala loves a certain act we would have hastened to carry it out and knowing that Allah Ta'ala is displeased with a certain act we would have stayed far away from it.

A Casual Relationship?

We would not be contented with having a casual relationship with Allah Ta'ala. How can we be contented with a casual relationship? If we look at our relationship with those we love, are we satisfied with just a basic relationship? No one is contented with just having a shallow bond with his dear ones. As a matter of fact, every one desires his relationship with those whom he/she loves to be par excellence.

Look at the relationship with the wife. Although this is a very weak bond in that it is connected with just a short statement of acceptance and just a single word of Talaaq severs this connection, yet no one satisfies himself with a superficial relationship with the wife. Every one desires his relationship with his wife to be perfect and intense. For the sake of intensifying this bond a man will go to extremes. He will purchase for his wife such garments and jewellery which are not

really necessary, nor a duty upon him, for the sole purpose of strengthening this bond.

If a man just fulfils the waajib rights of his wife there will be no pleasure in such a relationship and inevitably such a relationship will break down. Maintaining a relationship is dependent on strengthening it. Remember this well. A man will purchase for his wife as much as she desires and even more. He will have a healthy relationship with his in-laws. He will see to her happiness at all times, take her on holiday, make light her work at home. All this he does for the sake of strengthening the bond between him and his wife, whereas we have just mentioned that this bond is extremely thin and weak. Nevertheless, no one wishes to sever his relationship with his wife and if it reaches that stage, then what grief does it cause! For an enduring relationship all mustahab acts of marriage are resorted to.

We do all this for the sake of a relationship which is so flimsy, and we are so concerned with its permanency! It is then astonishing that in spite of our relationship with our Creator, Allah Ta'ala we display apathy at strengthening our bond with him. The bond with Allah Ta'ala can never be severed. We will always remain his creation and his servants. Considering this to be the strongest of all bonds, why are we not concerned with strengthening this bond? Why do we not think on the same lines here as we think in regard to our bond with our wives?

The permanence of a relationship is dependent on strengthening the relationship. Not working to strengthen a relationship endangers the relationship. Can anyone tolerate his relationship with Allah Ta'ala breaking? We cannot even tolerate our

relationship with our wives and children breaking; our relationship with our friends breaking, whereas these are all weak relationships, then how can we tolerate our relationship with Allah Ta'ala even weakening? To be content with a weak relationship with Allah Ta'ala is indeed a great injustice.

Our apathy towards Mustahab acts is the result of being unaware of the innumerable benefits and blessings of these Mustahab acts. When we learn of a certain practice being Mustahab we consider laxity in its practice to be no problem. This is a dangerous condition as it translates to us only being contented with a formal relationship with Allah Ta'ala.

If people in this world are very kind and munificent to us, do we hold casual relationships with them? Sometimes out of love or desire for something we go out of our way to see to the needs of our benefactors. Why is it then that in the obedience of Allah Ta'ala we only confine ourselves to Fardh and Waajibaat? And why do we not regard the Mustahabbaat to be of great importance?

Additional Benefits of Mustahab Acts

One barkat of carrying out Mustahab acts is that a person who practices on the Mustahabbaat will be less prone to sin. One who performs his Tahajjud and Ishraaq will abstain from sin more than one who only fulfils the five times Fardh Salaat.

Sometimes a Mustahab act becomes the means for one's salvation in the Aakhirah. Seebwaih was one of the most renowned grammarians of the Arabic language. However, in creed he was of the Mu'tazili sect which holds some corrupt

beliefs punishable in the Aakhirah. After he passed away someone saw Seebwaih in a dream and enquired about his condition in that world. He replied that he had been forgiven. Upon enquiry of the cause of his forgiveness he replied: "I was forgiven over a rule in grammar. The grammarians say that the strongest and most obvious proper noun is the first person pronoun. I, however, differed and proclaimed the strongest and most obvious proper noun to be the word "Allah". Allah Ta'ala declared: 'You have honoured my name. Today We will honour you. Go you are forgiven."

Look at this case of this grammarian being forgiven over a Mustahab deed. There are similar episodes narrated in the Hadeeth of sinful people being forgiven on account of Mustahab acts. We should, therefore, not misjudge the worth of Mustahab acts. Special bond and love of Allah Ta'ala hinges on carrying out the Mustahab acts of the Deen. May Allah Ta'ala grant us the courage, awareness and fervour to gain His Pleasure through Mustahab practices, Aameen. (Modified From *Thammun Nisyaan by Hazrat Moulana Thanwi Rahmatullahi Alaih)*

ISLAM AND SIMPLICITY – HONOUR AND RESPECT

Our Salaf (Spiritual Forefathers) had such a simple outlook towards life that when Hadhrat Umar Faarooq (Radhiyallahu anhu) set out for Baitul Maqdis simplicity cascaded from every action and condition of his. [Baitul Maqdis was in the clutches of the Roman Christians at the time, just as today it is the control

of the Zionists of Israel.] The Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum) had surrounded the city of Baitul Maqdis. The Christians in the city were prepared to fight to the death to hold onto the city. They said that in their scriptures the description of the Conqueror of Baitul Maqdis was clearly depicted. They were only prepared to open the gates of the city for the person who fits the description. They, therefore, wished to see the Leader of the Muslims – the Khalifah. The Commander of the Muslim Army, Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarraah (Radhiyallahu anhu) wrote to the Khalifah, Hadhrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu) for his graceful presence to break the deadlock. Thus Ameerul Mu-mineen Umar Bin Khattaab (Radhiyallahu anhu) set out on the long journey from Madinah Munawwarah through the arid desert to Shaam (the Levant).

The first mark of simplicity was that he did not make elaborate plans for the journey. Once he made his decision he left the very next day. He did not move with an army or so-called 'presidential' or 'royal' guards. He merely made known his intention and that whoever wished to accompany him should be ready the next day. On another occasion he went to Shaam only with his slave and one camel.

The second mark of simplicity was that when they arrived in Shaam at the camp of the Muslims outside Baitul Maqdis, the Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum) exhorted Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu) to don a new set of garments and seat himself on a stallion for his appearance before the Christian leaders and rulers of the city. Hadhrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu) was wearing a garment that was patched at many places and the long journey had borne its impressions on the ragged garment. In spite of this exhortation

going against the nature of the Khalifah, he chose to please his advisers and therefore put on a new robe and got onto a stallion. The stallion kicked aloft its forelegs and neighed pompously. Immediately the Khalifah subdued the animal and got off saying to his advisers: ***"Your flashy garments and ambling mule came close to destroying me."*** Thus saying he removed the new robe and got onto his camel.

Let us pause here and remove the cobwebs in our thinking. We are blissfully unaware of the reality of honour and awe. We labour under the misconception that awe and honour come with extravagant garments and flashy vehicles. This is highly erroneous. True honour is the product of perfection. What kind of honour is there in something fleeting? When one removes the extravagant garment one is stripped of one's so-called honour! As long as one is covered with the fanciful garment one is honoured. The moment one changes the garment one becomes disgraced! Is this called honour? Honour is that which remains with one all the time. That honour stems from perfection. And the honour of a Muslim is inextricably interwoven in the Garment of Islam. Adopt Islam perfectly, then – Insha-Allah – you will be honoured without any artificial paraphernalia.

Look at the dress of Hadhrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu)! Regardless, his awe and honour was such that when he departed from Madinah Munawwarah for Shaam the world shook with fear at the approach of the Khalifah of Islam. The kings of the world trembled and were struck with awe. What awe overwhelmed them? Was it awe for his dress? Never! His garment was such that Hadhrat Ali (Radhiyallahu anhu) states:

"Once, I saw Umar making Tawaaf. The kurta he was wearing had twenty-one patches."

People comment that Muslims are underdogs today on account of their poverty. Firstly, in spite of the [oil] riches of the Arab states look at their grovelling at the feet of their western masters. Secondly, if poverty was the reason for being losers how did the Sahaabah, in spite of their poverty, strike awe and respect into the hearts of the kuffaar? How did they conquer the world whilst being poor? Let it be known that awe and respect are not in fashionable clothing and being millionaires. A Muslim's honour lies solely in Islam. Muslims of yesteryear were Muslims in the true sense of the word and hence they achieved honour, whilst we are Muslims largely in name only and hence we are cringing in disgrace in spite of our relative affluence in relation to earlier Muslims.

Look at the illustrious Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum). On one occasion when Hadhrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu) came to Shaam and alighted at the tent of Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah (Radhiyallahu anhu) who was the Commander-in-Chief of the Muslim Forces, the Commander-in-Chief only had some dry pieces of roti and water to serve as meal. Hadhrat Sarmid's words come to mind here. He says:

The rich man eats his sumptuous dish, sips his sweet drink and passes away.

Sarmid enjoys his dry roti and plain water and passes away.

Tears welled in the eyes of Hadhrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu). *"O Abu Ubaidah,"* Hadhrat Umar started saying: *"Allah Ta'ala*

has opened up avenues of lavishness for you through the conquests. Why are you still living frugally?" Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah (Radhiyallahu anhu) replied: *"O Ameerul Mu-mineen! This world is merely provision for sustaining one on a journey. Since this [type of food which I have] is sufficient for me reaching my destination of the Aakhirat, what must I do with more?"*

Hadhrat Umar himself was asked once: "The victories on the battlefield have brought riches to your feet. Why do you still persist in living such an austere life?" Sayyidina Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu) replied: "Many of our brothers were martyred during the lifetime of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) in poverty. They achieved more in the Path of Allah and hardly enjoyed the pleasures of the world. Their full quota of thawaab has been reserved for the Aakhirah. We, on the other hand, have gained much wealth and riches with our conquests and our efforts have been rewarded here in this world. I fear that if I indulge in the luxuries of this world I will be rebuffed in the Aakhirat with the words:

"You have withdrawn in the world the deposits of your pleasures and indulged in them. Now you will be given a disgraceful punishment for you desired self-aggrandizement." *(Surah Ahqaaf, 20)*

We also learn from this that the poverty of our Salaf was not involuntary. They were not poor on account of having received nothing. Allah Ta'ala gave the illustrious Sahaabah ample wealth [when they undertook the mission of spreading the Deen of Islam]. But they would not horde wealth. They would

munificently give to the poor and destitute, whilst preferring for themselves a humble life. Did this humble state reduce their honour in any way? In fact, Allah Ta'ala conferred them with such honour that Muslims of today can only dream about such honour. Thus it is a grave error to think that leading a simple and humble life brings disgrace to one. It is in fact the foundation of grand honour when coupled with perfection in Deen.

(Modified from *Asbaabul Fitnah* of Hadhrat Moulana Thanwi Rahmatullahi alaih)

A LIFETIME OCCUPATION

Ilm-e-Deen – Knowledge of the Deen – requires endurance. The reason for this is that it is an endless chain. It is a lifetime occupation. In this path there are ups and downs. You have to occupy yourself till your last breath. A time will most definitely come when the Favour of Allah accompanies you.

One light-hearted Buzrug (saintly-person) asked the father of a lad what he (the lad) was studying. The father replied: "Hazrat, he is doing Hifz (memorizing the Qur'aan Shareef)." The Buzrug replied: "Bhai, why have you put him on a lifetime occupation?"

The Buzrug called Hifz “a lifetime occupation” because, truly, memorizing the Qur’aan Shareef is a matter of one or two years’ work, but maintaining it is a lifetime’s work. A little negligence and it leaves the memory. Hence, daily revision and annual recitation in Taraaweeh are necessary for retaining the Qur’aan in memory. For this reason it is a lifetime occupation. But blessed is this occupation for it brings the Pleasure of Allah.

Ilm is a Lifetime Occupation

In like manner, understand that Ilm is a lifetime occupation. Its study should be kept up a lifetime. It comes in the Hadeeth: *“Two cravings are never fulfilled; craving for worldly comforts and craving for Ilm.”* One who gets the taste of Ilm never finds his stomach filled; he desires more and more. The reason for this is that Ilm is infinite and hence searching for it; studying Ilm is also infinite. Brother! This Road never ends. When you reach a station, don’t stop, continue ahead.

If you comment that this lifetime chain is not possible for you; you can only manage a day or two of work, then why don’t you do away with eating? Say, “This endless eating, day in and day out, is unbearable.” Why have you put up with this lifetime routine of eating? You will say that this is food without which a person cannot live. Then just as that food is necessary for the body, similarly, Ilm is food for Imaan. Life as a Mu-min is dependent on Ilm. Just as eating food daily is easy for you, engross yourself in Ilm and you will see how easy it is to remain occupied with Ilm. Once you get the taste of Ilm you will find no peace without it.

Another Benefit of Studying Ilm-e-Deen

There is furthermore another benefit to it. The Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala is attained by virtue of it. A person who passes away whilst studying knowledge of the Deen receives the thawaab (reward) of a Shaheed (martyr).

Dear Friends! Allah Ta'ala seeks excuses to be happy with His servants. Someone saw Imam Muhammad (Rahmatullahi alaih) in a dream. He was asked about his condition. He replied: "I was brought before Allah Ta'ala. Allah Ta'ala declared: 'O Muhammad! Ask for what you want.' I replied: 'I ask for forgiveness.' Allah Ta'ala said: 'If We wanted to punish you We would not have given you Ilm. We gave you Ilm to forgive you. So, your forgiveness is assured; ask for something else."

Allah Ta'ala's Appreciation

Subhaanallah! Look at the virtue of Ilm of the Deen! Truly, Allah Ta'ala looks just for an excuse to forgive. In this regard at one place in the Qur'aan Allah Ta'ala says:

If you are grateful, that is, you bring Imaan then what is Allah going to do punishing you? **(Surah Nisaa, 147)**

In other words, there is no benefit to Allah in punishing you. Further He says:

"Allah Ta'ala is exceptionally grateful and omniscient."

He knows everything. He knows who has Imaan and who does not. And He is appreciative of every Mu-min's Imaan. This Aayat is so rich in meaning. He did not say that if you do not bring Imaan then He will punish you. Rather, He says that what

is He going to get out of punishing you? Those who understand the language and expression can understand the richness and depth of this statement.

What benefit does Allah Ta'ala get in punishing us? He is ever ready to forgive. There should just be someone who wishes to be forgiven. There was an idol-worshipper. Every day he used to worship his idol. For years and years he would say: *"Sanam! Sanam!"* [Sanam means 'idol'.] One day, unmindfully, instead of *'Sanam'* the *word 'Samad'* came from his tongue. [*'Samad'* is the name of Allah Ta'ala.] Immediately he heard a voice saying: *"I am present My servant."* The voice brought tears to his eyes and he took the idol and threw it away saying: "Wretched idol! For years I have been calling you and you never ever responded. I sacrifice my life for that Allah Whom I was indifferent to for all these years and just once His Name slipped from my tongue and He turned to me at once."

No Reason for Despondency

Dear Friends! When an idol-worshipper gets such attention through mistakenly taking Allah's Name, do you think that Allah Ta'ala will not turn to Muslims who call Him?" If Muslims desire to please Allah Ta'ala then He will most certainly turn to them. Make the intention to please Allah Ta'ala and you will see. By Allah Ta'ala it is a matter of: *"Return! Return! Whatever you are, return! Even if you are an infidel or fire-worshipper, return. This Portal of Ours is not a portal of despondency. Even if you have broken your taubah a hundred times, return."*

So what a great benefit there is in Ilm-e-Deen; with it the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala is obtained. Therefore, this chain should

never be broken. And if it breaks, then fix it and continue studying. If anyone cannot study regularly then learn irregularly. This is better than not learning at all. Continue in this manner. Insha-Allahu Ta'ala, one day order will fall in place with your study.

Moulana Roomi (Rahmatullahi alaih) is a great sage. He doesn't leave the Saalik in despondency in any condition. He says that if you aren't punctual with your Zikr and Shaghl (Spiritual Exercises) and you cannot find rhythm then continue in that haphazard and sporadic manner. Your Friend [Allah Ta'ala] loves that as well. Further he advances such a beautiful proof for this. He says that a haphazard effort is better than sleeping. This person is trying whilst the one who has dropped out is doing nothing.

Company of the Awliya

If someone cannot pursue Ilm constructively then at least he should meet frequently with the Ulama and ask them Masaail of the Deen. He should adopt their company for some time. In fact, this should be adopted even with one's course of study. One should not stop at just studying books because there is something which cannot be acquired without the company of the Awliya. And that is affinity with the Deen. Relationship with Deen cannot be achieved without company of the Awliya. The effect of company is as described by Shaikh Sa'di (Rahmatullahi alaih). He says in a parable: *"I picked up a sweet-smelling lump of soil. I asked it whether it was musk or ambergris. It replied that it was plain sand; however, the company of a sweet-smelling rose left its impression on it."*

See how sand became sweet-scented by virtue of being in the company of a rose! In the same manner, by keeping the company of the Lovers of Allah, love for Allah and affinity with Deen are produced.

The Sahaabah and Their Greatness

The greatness of the illustrious Sahaabah was by virtue of this company, to the extent that no Imam, no Faqeeh and no Wali, regardless of how great the Wali may be, can reach the rank of the most junior Sahaabi, whereas the Sahaabah weren't academics. Many sciences were formulated after their era. During their age all these sciences were non-existent which are in vogue today. But their greatest virtue was that they saw Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and they were blessed with his company. Thus, remember that company of the Awliya can be beneficial even without being a scholar; however, being a scholar without the company of the Awliya is seldom beneficial. For this reason Ulama are plentiful, but only a handful are True Guides of the Deen. They are those who benefitted from the company of a Master of Tasawwuf.

(Ta'meemut Ta'leem by Hazrat Moulana Thanwi Rahmatullahi Alaih)

TRUE HARM AND BENEFIT

True harm is in the displeasure of Allah. The benefits and harms of this world are of absolutely no significance in relation to the displeasure of Allah Ta'ala. This issue has been unravelled in very clear terms in the Qur'aan Shareef. Allah Ta'ala declares:

"They ask you (O Muhammad Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) about liquor and gambling, (whether these are halaal or haraam). Say: In these there is a big sin and many benefits."

Subhaanallah! What a pristine way of responding. The thought of the many mundane benefits could have led people to think that these should, therefore, not be declared to be haraam. Allah Ta'ala does not brand this notion as baseless. In fact, it is accepted that there are benefits in these (liquor and gambling) for people; and not only one benefit, but plenty of benefits. Hence Allah Ta'ala uses the plural *'manaafi'* which means, 'benefits'. But, there is a sin in it.

Here it is worthy of noting that in mentioning the benefits Allah Ta'ala uses the plural form, that is, 'benefits for mankind', and in mentioning the harm He uses a singular, that is, 'sin'. If this was the speech of a human the contrast would also have been with a plural; 'sins' would have been said. But this is not the case here. Allah Ta'ala specifically mentioned the singular; and this is to alert us to the point that if something carries a thousand benefits, but there is a sin attached to it, in other words there is a speck of Allah Ta'ala's displeasure in it, then those thousand benefits are worthless. The reason for this is that just as the pleasure of Allah, be it just a little, is a great treasure and hence Allah Ta'ala declares: ***"The pleasure of Allah is a huge treasure,"*** similarly, the displeasure of Allah Ta'ala is a huge calamity, regardless of the cause of that displeasure being just one sin. Accordingly, although the word, 'sin' is mentioned in its singular state, it is qualified with 'big'.

The gist of this is that although there are many benefits in drinking liquor and in gambling, however, there is also sin involved. And this sin is so huge that it wiped out all those benefits. Thus, further on (in the Aayat) the word ‘benefits’ is discarded. Rather, the word, *nafa’* or benefit is used. ***“Their sin is worse than their benefit.”*** Here the reason for using the singular is that preceding this it was declared that in contrast to the many benefits there is a sin involved. It is a rule that if a few grams of poison are mixed into a kilogram of sweetmeats then the kilo of sweetmeats will be inedible. In exactly the same manner, the benefits are not worthy of being procured in view of the one sin and hence the benefits are not even worthy of being expressed in the plural form. Allah Ta’ala thus says: ***“Their sin is greater than their benefit.”***

This Aayat hands down the ruling that the worldly benefit or harm in something is not the basis for something being halaal or haraam, as some people think. Sometimes they even say, *“What is the harm in this; there is benefit in it.”* Thus we find even so-called learned people labouring to promote the permissibility of appearing on TV and video. They have been duped into thinking that something which benefits another is necessarily permissible, irrespective of it flouting any established teaching and principle of the Shariah.

You have observed that in spite of Allah Ta’ala affirming numerous benefits in liquor and gambling, but He still declares them to be haraam. The reason for this is simply that Allah Ta’ala loathes these for humans on earth and is displeased with their indulgence. It is therefore confirmed that the basis of something being haraam is the displeasure of Allah Ta’ala. Thus, good

intentions are useless in so far as sins are concerned. A sin can never be permissible on the basis of any good intention. Good intentions are beneficial in permissible acts. In acts of Ibaadaat such as Salaat, Saum, etc. the acts are invalid without intention.

A Haraam Means Can Never Justify the End Goal

Thus, before embarking on anything one should scrutinize the means. If the means is permissible then the objective will be considered. If the objective is haraam then the whole exercise will be haraam. And if the means is haraam then this will preclude the attainment of the objective. The haraam means will not make permissible the acquisition of the end product. For instance, someone wishes to gather people for Salaat. Towards this end he opens a club room of dancing, music and games adjacent to the Masjid. Youngsters are lured to the Masjid with the bait of enjoying themselves in the club activities. Although the objective is for the youth to attend the Masjid for Salaat, however, a haraam means has been employed towards the end. The means will be decried and never be tolerated regardless of the hallucinated benefits.

Just consider this! In spite of Salaat being dear to Allah Ta'ala, a haraam means is never permitted for it. The error of those who regard their TV and video shows to be permissible on account of being of benefit to others is thus manifest. They do not see the inherent harm due to being blinded by the notion of benefitting others. Our response is that when it is not permissible to adopt haraam means to call people for Salaat, in spite of Salaat being so loved by Allah Ta'ala, then by what stretch of Islamic logic will it be permissible to give bayaans on a haraam platform?

The Mind-Set of a Muslim

The mind-set of a Muslim should be total shunning of anything in which there is the slightest displeasure of Allah Ta'ala. That activity in which there is the slightest displeasure of Allah Ta'ala is absolutely worthless, regardless of how many benefits there may be conceived in it. For a Muslim there is nothing dearer than the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala.

The Lovers of Allah Ta'ala ignore the external hardships they undergo. Worldly harm and loss do not deflect them from seeking the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. They are happy and comfortable with whatever condition Allah Ta'ala decides for them. In Jahannam there is a group of Malaaikah known as *Zabaaniyah* or the Wardens of Jahannam. For the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala they care not of serving in this abode of chastisement and being all the time with the inmates of this terrible abode. Although they – the Malaaikah of Jahannam – are not affected by the punishment in Jahannam, but obviously they witness all the time the inferno of Hell, blood, pus, horrible scenes, snakes, serpents, etc.

Another group of Malaaikah are the Attendants of Jannat. They experience beautiful scenes, gardens, refreshing breezes, wonderful faces, and the company of the people of Jannat who are refined in their ways, whilst the Wardens of Jahannam have to put up with the inmates of Hell who scream, bellow and curse all the time. The position of the two groups of Malaaikah is palpably contrasting. Can it be averred that the Wardens of Jahannam are hurt and inconvenienced by their duty? Never! If they are told, "You have the option of being posted to serve in Jannat where there are beautiful sceneries, delightful bounties

and wonderful people, but Allah Ta'ala prefers you here," *what will their response be? Their response will be: "O Beloved Allah! Without you Heaven will become hell and with you Hell is heaven."* This should be the mind-set of a Muslim. His gaze should be rigidly fixed on the pleasure and displeasure of Allah Subhaanahu Wa Ta'ala by strictly following the Shariah.

PERFECTION FOR WOMEN IN DEEN

"Be with those who are perfect in Deen."
(Surah Taubah, 119)

The way to achieve perfection in Deen is mentioned here. Keep the company of those who are perfect and accomplished in the Deen.

For men, it is easy to adopt this directive. Worthy of consideration is: How can this be achieved by women? This question is indeed important. The answer to this is that there are two ways. One is that women should benefit from those men from whom men benefit. However, this has its drawbacks. Firstly, men and women cannot associate. Secondly, due to pardah (hijaab rules) the Shaikh cannot have full congeniality with them. And without this congeniality, benefit is limited. And it is not permissible for them to come in front of the Buzrugs and abandon their pardah.

Yes, those women whose fathers or husbands are accomplished, they can gain spiritual direction from their respective fathers or

husbands. However, not everyone's father or husband is perfect in Deen. Thus this method also has its limitations.

The other way is for men to gain benefit from accomplished men and for women to gain benefit from accomplished women. It is regrettable, however, that there is a dearth of women who are accomplished in the Deen.

This leaves us with only two alternatives. One is for those women who have buzrug males among their mahaarim. They should derive their Deeni perfection from them. A woman whose husband is a Buzrug should acquire perfection from her husband. The problem here however is that either the husband is the slave of the wife, otherwise he definitely is an equal partner. Women do not respect and show honour to their husbands as required for a Murabbi (spiritual mentor). And without this protocol benefit is not possible.

Secondly, the wife does not hold the husband in such light as she holds another pious person, no matter how great the husband may be. Our Hazrat Haji Saheb's (Quddisa sirruhu) first wife, despite being very obedient to him, insisted on getting bai't to Hazrat Moulana Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaih). Hazrat Moulana Gangohi asked: "Why don't you become bai't to Hazrat Haji Saheb? How can it be appropriate to become bai't with me when Hazrat Haji Saheb is in our midst?" She replied: "There is no doubt in Haji Saheb being a Buzrug. But I do not want to be bai't to him. I wish to be bai't with you."

I don't know whether Hazrat Moulana Gangohi accepted her into bai't or not. Nevertheless, just consider this. She didn't want to take bai't from Hazrat Haji Saheb, rather from his Khulafa.

The second wife of Hazrat Haji Saheb, we have heard, was exceptionally pious. Those women who saw her say that the only difference between Hazrat Haji Saheb and her was that Haji Saheb was a male whilst she was a female, that's all. It is said that she understood the Mathnawi of Moulana Roomi really well. She was engaged to Hazrat Haji Saheb first. For some reason Hazrat broke the engagement. The marriage was called off. She married elsewhere. After her husband's death Hazrat then married her.

So, if a woman cannot benefit from her husband and there is no one perfect in Deen among her mahaarim then this leaves us with another method. She should study the kitaabs, malfoozaat and mawaa'iz (books, sayings and bayaans) of the Buzrugs. The writings and sayings of the Buzrugs have the same effect which is found in their suhbat (company). Moulana Roomi (Rahmatullahi alaih) says: "When the season of the flowers ends then get their fragrance from their essence. When the sun sets, then light up your home with lamps."

The Speech of the Ahlullah

It is observed that Noor cascades from the speech of the Ahlullah, whilst darkness drapes the speech of the deviates. The words of the Buzrugs are straightforward. They do not use flowery language, but studying their works produces Noor in the heart. On the other hand, those who are not observant of the Shariah, no matter how polished their words may be, these leave darkness in their wake, regardless of what they say being related to Deen. Since the words are theirs, therefore, darkness is a

corollary of their words. Whoever has the slightest spiritual perception can sense this difference without doubt.

In the speech of the Ahlullah again there is Noor which cannot be found in non-Ahlullah. One Buzrug's son went to study away from home. He qualified in his studies and returned home as an Aalim. He came to his father. The father told him to give the bayaan. The son gave the bayaan and spoke on high academic issues but there was no effect on anyone. After his bayaan the Buzrug father went on the mimbar and related an incident that happened at night. "I had intention of fasting today," he said. "I left some milk for Sehri. A stray cat came and drank up the milk." Just this much made the audience emotional.

The father explained to his son: "Son! The effect of one's heart falls on the audience, not the effect of words. You have acquired knowledge of words. Now let those words permeate your heart."

It is not necessary that tears roll from the eyes as a result of the Ahlullah's speech. Yes, tears roll from the hearts of the listeners from the words of the Ahlullah – those who have purified their hearts and saturated it with love for Allah.

Advice for These Times

In summary, experience and observation confirm that approximately the same benefit is gained from the writings of the Buzrugs as gained from staying with them. The benefit may not be exactly the same, but certainly close. Thus, if women cannot benefit from the company of Buzrugs, the sayings and life episodes of the Buzrugs are available. They should read these. Insha-Allah perfection will be achieved.

Even men should regularly study the sayings and episodes of the Buzrugs because not everyone has the time available to go and stay with the Buzrugs. Aarif-e-Shiraazi proffers the following advice for these times: "In these times he who does not have a friend (a spiritual guide) should take for company the sayings of those who were madly in love with Allah."

This also evinces that the benefit of a Friend in this Path can be gained in the way mentioned (by careful study of the sayings and directives of the Awliya). Thus, a person who does not have a Shaikh, he/she should make the kutub of the Mashaaikh his/her Shaikh.

Alhamdulillah, the question of how women can keep the company of those who are perfect in Deen has been answered from all angles. The answer in summary is that those who have a mahram who is accomplished in Deen should associate with him. Those who do not have such a mahram should search for a woman who has exemplary piety, knowledge and practice of the Deen. They should gain benefit with such a Waliyyah's company. And for those who cannot find any of the above two, they should faithfully study the bayaans, sayings, stories and writings of the Buzrugs.

The bayaan focussing on women in the context of the Aayat mentioned at the beginning is complete. I have shown them an absolutely simple way how to achieve perfection in Deen. Now it rests with them whether they practise or not. (*Al-Kamaal Fid Deen Lin Nisaa* by Hazrat Thanwi Rahmatullahi alaih)

HOLDING ON TO THE FAVOUR OF ALLAH

Allah Ta'ala declares:

"O People of Imaan! Fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die but as Muslims. Grab hold onto the Rope of Allah firmly altogether, and do not become disunited. Remember the Favour of Allah when you were enemies to each other and then He united your hearts. By virtue of His Favour you became brothers to each other. You were on the verge of falling into Hellfire, but He rescued you from it (Hellfire). In this manner Allah Ta'ala explains His Ahkaam (Commandments) to you so that you remain on the Path of Guidance." (Surah Aali Imraan, 102/3)

Although these Aayaat were revealed in respect of a particular incident, however, the purport is not restricted to that episode. In fact, Allah Ta'ala has shown us a program to follow in order that such a scenario is not repeated and we remain safe from other calamities as well.

The incident goes like this that prior to the advent of Sayyidina Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) there were two tribes of the Arabs in Madinah; the Ows and the Khazraj. They were bitter enemies. When these Madinite tribes embraced Islam their enmity turned to unity and their hatred changed to friendship and brotherhood. With the Hijrat of Sayyidina Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) to Madinah Tayyibah the unity became reinforced.

This unity was exceptionally difficult upon the Yahood. One Yahoodi, observing the Ows and Khazraj in a gathering like bosom friends, became inflamed with jealousy. He appointed a person to go to the gathering of the Ansaar and recite those poems which the two tribes would recite during warfare and during their period of enmity. The mischief-maker achieved his aim and a fire was ignited. Passed episodes of dispute and internecine warfare crossed their minds and they started bickering over blame for their former mutual hostility. Passions were aroused and anger clouded their thinking. They drew swords and were ready for a showdown.

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was informed about this and he immediately made his way to the gathering. *"What is this chaos?", he said. "In my presence and whilst I am alive; after becoming Muslims and sharing mutual love and unity you are descending to such deplorable behaviour? Do you desire to return to your former state of kufr after embracing Islam?"*

These words of caution jolted everyone back to their senses and they realized that they were engaged in some satanic action. They embraced each other, cried and made Taubah. The conspiracy of the haasideen (jealous enemies of Islam) came to naught.

"They conspired and desired to plant evil, but We made them the losers." (Surah Al-Ambiya, 70)

The resultant unity was even stronger and the Sahaabah understood now that in-fighting and internecine warfare for base motives are virtual acts of kufr. The avenue was closed for ever

and the plan of the enemy backfired. The love and friendship among the Sahaabah became even more intense.

The Shayaateenul Ins Wal Jinn (Devils of the jinn and man) are sometimes deluded, like that Yahoodi who wished to create a rift and fight between the Ows and Khazraj. Had he known the consequence of his action he would never have ventured to make them fight. Not only did Allah Ta'ala make him unsuccessful in this incident, for posterity Allah Ta'ala closed the door of in-fighting and fratricide.

The preceding Aayaat condemn the Ahlul Kitaab who set up such a scheme. This condemnation is eloquently portrayed by firstly condemning them over their kufr. The gist of it is that you were supposed to become Muslims, not scheme ways to lead others away from the Straight Path.

Then Muslims are addressed and directed: The Ahl Kitaab severely dislike your unity and brotherhood which unity and brotherhood are the means for success in this world and the Hereafter. They wish to see you cutting each other's throats. If you follow them, they will convert you to kufr after your Imaan. It is gross ignorance and foolishness to be beguiled by the enemy and in the process harm oneself and make them pleased. Ahead of that Allah Ta'ala states:

"And how can you commit kufr when (factors deterring kufr are before you, such as) the Aayaat of Allah Ta'ala are being recited to you and the Rasool of Allah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is in your midst."

These are two formidable means of remaining firm on Imaan. Thus, it is incumbent upon you to hold onto Imaan and the Teachings of Islam as the Kitaabullah and the Sunnah of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) teach you. And remember:

"Whoever holds on firmly to Allah Ta'ala (in other words, obeys Him and disobeys the adversary of Allah Ta'ala) then undoubtedly such a person is guided to the Straight Path."

In this Aayat kufr has a broader meaning. It covers kufr in belief, as well as an act typical of the kuffaar. Fighting and killing co-religionists are acts associated with kufr, for it is close to kufr. These lead to disunity which is a sin and it ruins strength and progress. Engaging in this turmoil takes one away from the Deen of Haqq. When disunited then every person contrives every possible way to bring down his adversary, regardless of the plan being permissible or impermissible, civil or uncivil. Hence the Hadeeth Shareef has termed disunity as Haaliqah (razor). Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) furthermore elaborated on its meaning. He said: *"I don't mean it shaves the hair, rather it shaves off one's Deen."*

Obviously when a Muslim becomes distanced from his Deen then he draws close to kufr. It is a logical principle that something close to another falls in its category. For this reason the Fuqaha have judged a person closer to Qiyaam [the standing position in Salaat] as having stood, a person closer to Qu'ood [the sitting position in Salaat] as having sat, something in which there is overwhelming alloy as an alloyed substance and that in

which silver is dominant as silver. On the basis of this principle it is correct to declare an act which is close to kufr as kufr and its perpetrator as virtually a kaafir. The Qur'aan was revealed in idiomatic speech. In such speech a person who adopts the actions of another people is labelled with the foreign people's epithet.

From what has been mentioned we can gauge that we as Muslims and disunited, just how sever this condition of ours is. Allah Ta'ala declared it to be kufr. As a result the Sahaabah were severely jolted and they took heed. So Allah Ta'ala set a program for them. What happened has happened. The past is the past. Prepare for the future so that this sin does not rear its ugly head again. Thus Allah Ta'ala commanded them firstly with Taqwa and constancy on Islam. Then they were instructed to grab hold firmly on the Rope of Allah [the Shariah]. Further Allah Ta'ala states:

"Recall the Favour of Allah upon you when you were enemies and Allah then bonded your hearts. By virtue of this Favour of Allah you became brothers to each other."

Remembering the blessing of unity is instructed here. Think about this favour and the blessings of it. And judge this with your previous state [of kufr and in-fighting]. What disastrous condition was that! On the other hand look at your condition of unity and what eternal bliss it carries.

(From *Ad-Dawaam alal Islam* by Hazrat Thanwi Rahmatullahi Alaih)

RUIN OF THE MASAAJID

Allah Ta'ala says:

"And who is crueller than the person who blocks the Zikr and Ibaadat of Allah in Allah's Masaajid and strives to ruin and make desolate the Masaajid? It does not behove such people but to enter the Masaajid with fear and awe. For them are disgrace in this world and severe punishment in the Aakhirat."

(Surah Baqarah, 114)

Although there is some difference in regard to the cause of the Revelation of this Aayat, but it is commonly agreed that the Aayat is general in purport and covers the ruin of the Masaajid at the hands of Muslims as well as non-Muslims.

"They should not enter but with fear and awe" is proof of the preceding statement. The gist of this is that they should enter the Masaajid with humbleness and calmness instead of preventing others who are Zaakireen and Mukhliseen (those who make the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala and are sincere) from entering, as such obstruction is loud testimony to their brazenness. Thus, such a person is an indelible oppressor.

Although the wording of the Aayat is restrictive in that it speaks of non-Muslim' interference and obstruction, the condemnation covers Muslims in another way, however. This is due to the condemnation being judged on the basis of "striving to ruin the Masaajid". 'Ruin' of the Masaajid is in contrast to 'inhabiting'

the Masaajid, and 'inhabiting' the Masaajid is by virtue of Zikr and Salaat. Thus, ruin of the Masaajid is on account of anything nugatory of Zikr and Salaat and hence if any act militating against Zikr and Salaat is committed by a Muslim, he (the Muslim) will come within the glare of this censure.

When Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) saw a dream in Madinah of a journey for Umrah – the dreams of the Ambiya are true – he mentioned this dream to the Sahaabah. Although the dream did not specify the year of Umrah, but out of sheer eagerness the Sahaabah expressed their desire to make preparations for the journey. Rasoolullah's (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) soft-nature induced him to accept this proposal. The kuffaar of Makkah prevented him from entering Makkah Mukarramah, however. Declaring this blockade to be ruining the Masjid, Allah Ta'ala passed judgement over them as *"striving to ruin the Masaajid."* The reason for this was simply that they prevented Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and the Sahaabah who were Zaakireen and Mukhliseen from entering Masjidul Haraam.

It is thus established that any action in the Masjid which obstructs the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala, be it a causative factor, comes within the glare of *"preventing (others) from the Masaajid of Allah and striving to ruin the Masaajid."* The kuffaar of Makkah did not put lock and key to the Masjid. They did not desecrate the Masjid or break its structure. And it is obvious that to speak worldly things or do mundane acts in the Masjid is neither Zikr nor related to Zikr. Therefore, without doubt these are sinful and zulm.

The Aayat negating the Mushrikeen inhabiting the Masaajid is proof that inhabiting the Masjid is by virtue of Zikr and Salaat. The Aayat conveys that the Mushrikeen are not fit to occupy the Masaajid in view of them being bereft of the medium of its occupation which medium is mentioned in the following Aayat. And that occupation is Zikrullah which is expressed in this Aayat:

"Only those inhabit the Masaajid of Allah who believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish Salaat, discharge Zakaat and fear only Allah."

(Surah Taubah, 18)

The Purpose of the Masaajid

In this Aayat the actual purpose is the mention of 'establishing Salaat' for which purpose the Masjid serves. For this, the condition of Imaan is mentioned whilst 'giving Zakaat' is the completion of this whole. In other words, establishing Salaat which refers to fulfilling all the Rights of Salaat is dependent on sincerity and love. One sign of this sincerity and love for Salaat is spending in the Path of Allah. In short, mere verbal Zikr, as is found in Salaat is not proof of sincerity. In fact one has to spend in charitable works as well. Only one who has sincerity in his heart will give Zakaat, for there is no agency which forcibly takes Zakaat.

Another proof that the purpose of the Masjid is Zikr, is this Aayat:

"They (those on Hidaayat) go to such places (the Masaajid) in respect of which Allah has authorized these places' honour and His Name to be taken therein..."

(Surah Noor, 36)

Third Proof is the Hadeeth:

"The Masaajid have been constructed solely for the Zikr of Allah."

Thus anything which is unrelated to Zikr is ruin of the Masjid and forbidden. In fact, the Fuqaha have even written that an Ustaad who takes a wage should not teach in the Masjid. Earning a wage is seeking a livelihood which is a mundane activity and hence forbidden in the Masjid. Yes, the teaching of Deeniyyaat in the Masjid for one who does not take a wage is permissible.

The fourth proof is that among the signs of Qiyaamah, this is mentioned in the Hadeeth: *"Their Masaajid will be populated, but ruined."*

Being 'populated' and 'ruined' at the same time is by the outward structure being beautiful and adorned and the congregation large, but there will be lack of Khuloos and Zikr (Sincerity and the Remembrance of Allah Ta'ala).

The fifth proof is that people asked Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) what the worst place was and what the best place was. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) replied that he did not

know. He asked Jibreel (Alaihis Salaam). He also answered that he did not know, but will ask Allah Ta'ala. He went and asked. Through the barkat of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) Jibreel (Alaihi Salaam) gained so much closeness to Allah Ta'ala that he says: "I never came so close then that occasion; there were only seventy thousand veils between myself and Allah Ta'ala."

In short, Allah Ta'ala answered that the worst place is the bazaar (malls/shopping area) and the best place is the Masjid. We should ponder over the difference between the two. The difference is *zikrud dunya* and *Zikrullah*. The bazaar is a place of talk related to the world whilst the Masjid is a place of Remembrance of the Aakhirah. Thus, the purpose of the Masjid is to remember Allah. Speaking worldly matters in the Masjid is to turn it into the worst place and that is its ruin.

Take Lesson and Reflect

Here those persons who, in spite of not knowing Masaail, brazenly answer questions should take lesson from Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and Jibreel (Alaihis Salaam) saying, *"Laa adri"* – I do not know.

It is also worthy of reflecting over Hazrat Jibreel (Alaihis Salaam) judging seventy thousand veils to be exceptional closeness. Thus, those who engage in a little Zikr and Shaghl (spiritual exercises) and then expect to see the vision of Allah Ta'ala are indeed in grave error. Do they clamour for greater Qurb (closeness) than Jibreel (Alaihis Salaam)?

Mundane Talk and Affairs in the Masjid

So, it is proven from the Hadeeth just mentioned that it is despicable to speak matters related to the world in the Masjid. Some people slander the Sahaabah by saying that they (the Sahaabah) would also sit and speak like us in the Masjid. This is naked slander. If the Sahaabah Kiraam did not carry out the instructions of Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) then who else is there to carry out the Nabi's instructions? Speaking mundane affairs in the Masjid is a zulm in itself; on top of that a greater zulm is committed by accusing the Sahaabah of speaking such things in the Masjid! Instead of making taubah from such evil talk, they accuse the Akhyaar (most noble) of the Ummah of what they themselves (those who seek to justify their haraam talk in the Masjid) are involved in.

Once, I really appreciated something from a friend of mine who happens to be my student as well. I was in the Masjid. I exchange a note with someone for small change. This friend immediately said: "This is a bai' (monetary transaction) which is forbidden in the Masjid." This is the way of the Ahl-e-Haq. They caution their elders as well, but with due respect.

Inculcate This State When Going to the Masjid

The essence of this discussion is that when going to the Masjid your attitude should be like when going to the law court. Your mind should be present and your body in full composure. Your condition should be as portrayed in this couplet:

Don't be inattentive of the King's presence for even a moment. Perhaps He casts His glance of Rahmat on you, but you are negligent

Such a state should be all the time, otherwise at least when going to the Masjid.

(*Aadaabul Masaajid* of Hazrat Thanwi Rahmatullahi Alaih)

THE LIFE OF A TRUE SOOFI (PART ONE)

Some friends who are on the Path of Sulook (Tasawwuf) requested me to outline a programme for them. Initially I didn't have any topic in mind and the topic they suggested requires khalwat (solitude), I therefore did not give a definite word. This morning, however, the opening verses of *Surah Muzzammil* crossed my heart. It appears that in these verses the complete way of Sulook is mentioned. Therefore, today, something shall be said about these Aayaat.

Says Allah Ta'ala:

"O One wrapped in a shawl! Stand up the night, except for a portion (of it); half the night or reduce it somewhat or increase it."

The instructions given in these Aayaat are given directly to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam), but the Ummah is included in the injunction.

The Lover and Beloved Sharing Feelings

Muzzammil means: one who is wrapped in a shawl. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was deeply hurt at the denial of the

kuffaar. He desired that these miserable people accept Imaan for their salvation from the Fire of Jahannam. Instead of accepting Imaan they were in outright denial and they made fun of and opposed the Aayaat of Allah. For this reason Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) in a state of extreme grief, concern and dejection sat down wrapped in his shawl and hence he was portrayed like that in this address to console him.

This is like a person who is overcome with worry due to his enemies conspiring against him and vilifying him. In this scenario when his beloved calls him with words depicting his condition of dismay then understand how much consolation he gets out of this knowing that his beloved understands and shares his grief. The words depicting his external condition serve to bring back joy to his heart. One reason for this is that he realizes that his beloved is sharing his feelings. Similarly, here, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was addressed in this particular manner to give him comfort, followed by instructions of carrying out some particular deeds and exercising patience over the unsavoury circumstances.

Elsewhere in the Qur'aan, also, this type of instructions is given. Allah Ta'ala says:

"Be patient over what they say and instead recite the Tasbeeh and Tahmeed of your Rabb."

The scenario here is the same as above where the beloved tells the lover: "My Dear! You speak to me. Look at me. Leave your enemies to speak tripe. Engage in conversation with me. Do this."

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was consoled through Wahi, but in his Ummat there are the Ahlullah who are inspired with such comforting words from the unseen.

The Kaamil and Grief

From the word *'Muzzammil'* a mas-alah is drawn. Earlier we learnt that the reason for Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) donning a shawl was his profound grief and dejection. This shows that a Kaamil (one who is perfect in the Deen) never sheds human feelings and exigencies in spite of his perfection. Like here, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) became sad over the antagonism of the adversaries.

A difference between us and him, however, is that our grief on such occasions is due to narrow-mindedness and weak temperaments whilst the grief of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was out of extreme care, affection and mercy.

Nevertheless it is proven that a Kaamil never comes out of his natural disposition and this should be so because how then will it be possible to make sabr when hurt or afflicted with some adversity. Sabr means to bear something unsavoury. And when nothing is unsavoury to a person then how is he going to make sabr?

The Ahkaam

Now, after the call of *Yaa Ayyuhal Muzzammil* the Ahkaam are mentioned. These Ahkaam can be summarized as follows: There are two relationships: one with Khaaliq – the Creator – and one with makhlooq – the creation. The relationship with creation is also twofold; one with friends and one with adversaries. Several

aspects of these relationships pertaining to etiquette and actions are mentioned.

Qiyaamul Lail

The first relationship is with the Creator. Pertaining to this relationship it is stated: ***"Stand up in Salaat at night, except for a portion of the night."*** Here Salaat and an etiquette pertaining to obedience unto Allah Ta'ala are taught, and furthermore, moderation is also alluded to.

The etiquette is that such a time was prescribed for *Qiyaamul Lail* (standing in Salaat at night), which is neither encumbered with the pangs of hunger nor the loading of the stomach which makes a person feel upset or lethargic resulting in the Qiyaam being difficult to bare. The time prescribed is when there is neither of the two. It is a time when one feels light and happy. There is resemblance to the Malaaikah in this as well for they are not afflicted with hunger, nor do they feel the lethargy of a full stomach. Also, in the dark hours of the night there is peace of mind.

Moderation in this *Qiyaam* is by not instructing standing the whole night because that is austere. On the contrary, some portion of the night has been left for sleep. And in view of specifying for every occasion and for every circumstance and for every person a regime being unfeasible, thus the words 'half', 'third', 'two-thirds' – as understood from the following Rukoo' – and 'less than half or increase it somewhat', the amount is left to the discretion of the addressed. If he is unable to stand up for a long period then for a short while also. The Hadeeth Shareef says: **"any portion of the night."**

The rationale behind this moderation is that constancy can be achieved in this balanced approach, not in excessive exertion.

This *Qiyaamul Lail* – which means Tahajjud – was Fardh. After the abrogation of its Fardh status it assumed the Sunnat status. And the evidence of it being Sunnat-e-Mu-akkadah is stronger.

Those who are deprived of Tahajjud Salaat are commonly in error. Some people think that Tahajjud is only during the late hours of the night. Since they find it difficult to wake up at this time they abandon Tahajjud Salaat. Bear in mind that if you cannot get up during the late hours of the night it is still permissible to offer Tahajjud Salaat before sleeping, before the Witr Salaat.

Some think that after Tahajjud one cannot sleep; by sleeping the Tahajjud is nullified. On account of this erroneous notion they, too, do not offer Tahajjud Salaat, whereas to sleep after Tahajjud Salaat is permissible.

In short, the practice of Tahajjud Salaat is necessary for those on the Path of Sulook.

(From *Seeratus Soofi* of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi Rahmatullahi alaih)

THE LIFE OF A TRUE SOOFI (PART TWO)

And if your Tahajjud becomes qadha (that is, one overslept) then don't be thrown into undue grief. Perform its qadha. This is what is meant in the Aayat:

"He has made the night and day alternate continuously for those who wish to understand."

Some people become excessively grieved when their Tahajjud becomes qadha. They moan and groan of their Tahajjud never having become qadha before. Bear in mind that sometimes, the outcome of such worry is that one becomes occupied with oneself instead of one's occupation with the Beloved (Allah Ta'ala). Engrossing themselves in this grief they become deprived of the Actual Zikr. Man has been created to absorb himself with the True Beloved. He should not occupy himself with others.

It is said: ***"The past and the future are barriers between the bandah (servant) and Allah."***

In short, don't trouble yourself with anxiety. Experience teaches that sometimes by making things easy for yourself you happily carry out the work, whilst burdening oneself results in routine work also being missed. Therefore, do not make things difficult upon yourself. A happy worker produces wonderful work.

Tarteel of the Qur'aan and Zikr

All this was the bayaan of *Qiyaamul Lail* and its etiquette of moderation. Now the second practice of the Ahl Sulook is mentioned:

"And recite the Qur'aan with tarteel."

Tarteel means to recite cautiously. During the age of the Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum), among the ways of bonding oneself with Allah Ta'ala was permanent and guarded recitation of the Qur'aan and offering of Salaat. The dream of Hazrat Shah Abdul Azeez Saheb is well-known. He asked Hazrat Ali (Karramallahu wajhahu) what methodology of the Soofiyah was harmonious to their (the Sahaabah's) methodology. Hazrat Ali (Radhiyallahu anhu) replied: ***"During our time, together with Zikr there was also Qur'aan and Salaat. But, nowadays, Zikr is taken to be the be-all and end-all."***

One reason for this change is that the hearts of the Sahaabah by virtue of the blessed association with Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) were fertile without all the conditions which developed later. Through the spiritual effulgence of the company of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) khuloos (sincerity) had become embedded in their hearts. They were not in need of added conditions to their Zikr. On the other hand, people of later generations did not have this sincerity without steps implemented to produce this in the heart. Thus the Soofiyah Kiraam who are mujtahids in this field (of spiritual reformation) devised specific methods of Azkaar and Ashghaal and attached special conditions for these.

Experience has proven that when the Ism Zaat (the word, ALLAH) is repeated in solitude and appropriate *zarb* and *jahr* are also observed then the effects are greater and more durable on the heart. The heart melts and burns with the love of Allah Ta'ala. This love produces Ikhlaas in Ibaadat which is commanded by Allah Ta'ala in this and other Aayaat:

"They have been instructed with nothing else besides offering Ibaadat unto Allah Ta'ala with Ikhlaas in their Deen." (Surah Bayyinah, 5)

Thus, the illustrious Soofiyah had devised these specifications as a treatment method; the objective being nothing but Ikhlaas. Therefore, if anyone is uncomfortable with these conditions or without these conditions he can conduct the Masnoon Azkaar, Tilaawat and Salaat with complete Ikhlaas then the Soofiyah do not regard such conditions necessary for him.

We learn from this that all these specifications and conditions are prescribed as remedial and boosting measures. These are not taken to be Shar'i injunctions and acts of Qurbat (Divine Proximity) per se.

(An example of this is physical exercise. Physical exercise in the form of specific training methods, such as doing push ups and squats, etc. are not commanded by the Shariah. However, to develop the body physically is desired for Jihaad which is among the Ahkaam. Thus, the specific forms of physical exercise employed to gain strength and stamina for carrying out the Hukm of Jihaad are permissible and indirectly incumbent. – Translator)

In summary, the second instruction to those on the Path of Sulook is Tilaawat of the Qur'aan.

Spiritual Strength and Stamina

Then Allah Ta'ala states:

"We are going to drop a heavy speech on you."

This is connected to the preceding Aayaat in this manner that the "heavy speech" refers to Wahi. Wahi is demanding. Strength to bear the 'heaviness' of Wahi is produced by continuous offering of Namaaz and recitation of the Qur'aan Majeed. Hence, Namaaz and Tilaawat were instructed firstly. The 'heaviness' of Wahi is reported in the Ahadeeth where it is mentioned that the camel of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would drop into the sitting position, a Sahaabi says his thigh felt like bursting when Rasoolullah's thigh was pressed against his and Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) perspiring in the thick of winter. All these were the effects of the heaviness.

These Aayaat also mention the effects of Wahi:

"Did We not expand your heart and We lifted the load which was breaking your back?" (Surah Inshiraah, 1-3)

"Had We sent down this Qur'aan on a mountain you would have seen it (the mountain) brought down in pieces…" (Surah Hashr, 21)

This Aayat conveys the meaning very lucidly.

Strength borne out of continuous and increased Salaat, Tilaawat and Zikr and lightening of the load of Wahi are as a result of

Zikr, etc. producing academic and practical inspirations and effulgence on the heart. By these the heart gradually becomes stronger and by virtue of this increase in its strength it is able to easily bear the heaviness and difficulty. For this reason we notice the uneasiness of those who are constantly going through different phases in Sulook (the Ahl Talawwun), whilst those who are entrenched in the Path of Sulook (the Ahl Tamkeen) nonchalantly bear all difficulties.

The heart could not tolerate anything in the beginning. By virtue of increased Zikr its threshold of toleration and its power increased.

These spiritual states are of various hues. Sometimes there is eagerness, excitement, happiness and exuberance, whilst on other occasions they are in the form of grief and depression. Bast (spiritual exuberance) has its benefits and qabz (spiritual depression) has its benefits and goals. All are praiseworthy. Qabz also serves to spiritually reform the nafs and cure vanity.

THE LIFE OF A TRUE SOOFI (PART THREE)

Further, Allah Ta'ala says:

"Indeed there is intense harmony of the heart and tongue and precise utterance in the vigil of the night."

This Aayat states that in view of the peace from noise and distraction at this time of the night and it is not a time for worldly occupations the heart is at rest and peace. Hence, whatever is recited during this time has a great impression on the heart and whatever is done during this time has a strong effect. Thus, this Aayat appears to be the rationale of the preceding Aayaat. For the reasons mentioned, presence of mind is on a high level during this time, therefore, the benefits of *Qiyaamul Lail* and *Tarteel* will be accrued fully.

Concentration for the Beginner and the Advanced Saalik

A point learnt from experience connected to presence of the mind is that the beginner in Sulook should deliberately intend every word he utters. Similarly, by paying attention to the words, concentration is gained. After a while, proficiency is achieved and then there remains no need for much deliberation.

The advanced Saalik on the other hand gains concentration by focussing his mind on Allah. In the beginning this is difficult because the beginner's mind does not remain focused on something absent from his mind. The advanced Saalik, however, can keep his mind on Allah Ta'ala.

Tahajjud, Tableegh and Tarbiyat

Thereafter, Allah Ta'ala says:

"Indeed you have plenty of work during the day."

Firstly it was wisely mentioned that Tahajjud and the Qur'aan Majeed should be read for their effects are greater at that time. Here another reason is added; you have other work during the day as well and on account of that you cannot achieve the special focus of mind on Allah Ta'ala. Thus this time of the night has been prescribed as it is free of other occupations.

And the obligations of the day are: Tableegh (propagation) of the Deen, Tarbiyat (spiritual reforming) of creation and other necessary and unavoidable human needs.

Although Tableegh of the Deen and Tarbiyat of creation are also part and parcel of Deen, but in view of some connection to creation in these, the special and complete attention to Allah Ta'ala, therefore, cannot be realized from these as can be acquired through complete seclusion.

Changes in One's Spiritual Condition – Unavoidable

Here, what was mentioned earlier is confirmed again. In spite of perfection in Deen a man can never shed the human exigencies within him. Consider that the Aayat clearly points out that the lengthy engagements of the day are obstructions to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) having peace of mind. And in view of all his states being perfect it is established that engaging with creation is not nugatory of being perfect. Thus, a Saahib-e-Kamaal (one fully accomplished in Deen) does not remain in an unchanged state all the time.

The episode of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddeeq and Hazrat Hanzalah (Radhiyallahu anhuma) is mentioned in the Hadeeth. Hazrat Hanzalah considered himself to be a munaafiq (hypocrite) on

account of his condition in the company of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) being different to his condition away from Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddeeq responded that his condition was the same as Hazrat Hanzalah's. They brought their problem to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said: *"O Hanzalah! There is a time for this (condition) and a time for that (condition)."*

And as a matter of fact if the same condition of total engrossment settles over a person all the time then physically he will become redundant. The Manifestation of Allah will annihilate him and he will not be able to care for anyone. He will thus perish.

Secondly, pleasure and enthusiasm are produced when a state does not become monotonous. An unchanged state diminishes pleasure which one finds with something new.

A'maal – The Object of This Life

Another *hikmat* in this is that overwhelming absorption negates intention and without intention there is no thawaab over deeds. Without deeds there is no Proximity to Allah. *A'maal* (deeds) are the object of this life. We have been sent to this world to make *amal*. Before coming to this world the Rooh was in that particular condition of perpetual absorption in the Divine Zaat. But there were no *A'maal* forthcoming from it (the Rooh). For *A'maal* it was sent to earth. Thus, *A'maal and Ajr* (actions and reward) are established to be high-priority objectives. The Muhaqqiqeen Soofiyah have thus said that in *istighraaq* (total absorption) there is no advancement.

From all these points you will have realised that just as there are reasons for *Tajalli* (Divine Manifestation), similarly there are good reasons for *istitaar* (being veiled from Divine manifestation) as well.

Once You Have Completed Your Work

Here we learn something worthy of note. Tableegh of the Deen and Ta'leem of Ahkaam being of benefit to others are more beneficial than self-restricted benefit and hence the advanced and accomplished Saalik occupies himself with these. In spite of that, Allah Ta'ala instructs that in the night you offer Tahajjud and recite the Qur'aan with tarteel, considering your load of work during the day.

At another place Allah Ta'ala says:

"Once you have completed (your work) then make every effort to engross yourself with your Rabb."

This proves that the *Kaamil* should also do something for his own good. Even after becoming accomplished he should not become neglectful of Zikr, otherwise his condition will deteriorate and others will not gain perfect benefit from him because without practising oneself there is no barkat (blessing) in one's Ta'leem (teaching).

This is conveyed in the popular saying: ***"Whoever doesn't have a wird (spiritual programme), doesn't have a waarid (high spiritual state)."***

But it is wrong for the accomplished to abandon society and take to permanent seclusion. One should not regard oneself to be

worthy of spiritual guidance, however. When the Shaikh grants permission then start this work. To have this intention from the outset and to engage in *Zikr and Shaghl* with this *niyyat* is detrimental. With this intention success is a pipedream. And the reason for this is that this intention is a branch of self-aggrandizement.

THE LIFE OF A TRUE SOOFI (PART FOUR)

Combining the Rights of Khaaliq Ta'ala and Khalq

There remains a question about a Kaamil attending to creation. Does this not prevent him from attention to Khaaliq (the Creator-Allah Ta'ala)? The response to this is that the question is irrelevant in respect of a Kaamil who is fully accomplished in the Path of Sulook. The reason for this is that in view of the Kaamil's magnanimous spirituality his attention towards creation is not obstructive to him remembering Khaaliq.

Furthermore, his service to creation is by the Command of Khaaliq Ta'ala and his purpose in this is carrying out the order of Allah Jalla wa Alaa and pleasing Him. Thus, his attention towards creation is solely for the sake of Allah. His engrossment with khalq (creation), therefore, is not obstructive to his engrossment with Haq Ta'ala. In fact this attention to creation is to fulfil the rights (huqooq) of creation.

The Aayat: ***"Indeed you have plenty of work during the day,"*** incidentally points to these rights.

The rights are: correcting the public and providing moral and spiritual guidance. However, one should not become forgetful of the Rights of Haq Ta'ala in fulfilling the rights of makhlooq (creation). It is for this reason that before stating the right of creation the Right of Allah is mentioned in: ***"Stand up the night,"*** and after mentioning the rights of makhlooq it is stated: ***"And take the name of your Rabb."*** The indication here is: "Don't forget about Us in your work." He has given a reminder at the beginning and at the end.

An Easy Concentration Method

For ordinary folk a simple and beneficial way of achieving concentration, through the grace of Allah, comes to mind. One should think that Allah Ta'ala has, for example, "asked me to recite for Him the Qur'aan. I am reading to Allah for He has asked me to recite to Him." Concentration can easily be gained with this meditation.

Tabattul

Thereafter, Allah Ta'ala states:

"Forget about everything and turn towards Him."

This means that besides the Ahkaam mentioned you are furthermore instructed to forget about everything else – Tabattul. Your knowledge of everything else and love for others should be overwhelmed by knowledge of Him and love for Him. The effect

of the former being overwhelmed surfaces when there is a clash of interests. For instance, two opposing works are faced at one time; the one is in fulfilment of the relationship with Allah and the other is due to the relationship with others, and combining both is not possible. On such occasions to choose the work of Allah and to abandon that which is in conflict to the Pleasure of Allah, is forgetting about others (Tabattul). It does not mean: to have nothing to do with anyone. However, excessive association with people is harmful.

Tawakkul

Further Allah Ta'ala declares:

"He is the Rabb of the east and the west. There is no one worthy of worship but Him. Therefore, hand over all your affairs unto Him."

In other words, have Tawakkul. Thus, Tawakkul is another requisite for the Ahl Sulook. He says that He is the Lord of the east and west. Thus, whatever condition He has put you in there is definitely wisdom in it.

It is proven that in most cases of spiritual depression (qabz) the heart and soul are thoroughly purified. Thus you should not become dejected. Place your trust in Allah Ta'ala. There is some healthy reason for your state.

The mention of east and west is so appropriate for *qabz* and *bast* (spiritual depression and exuberance). The east resembles *bast* in which lofty spiritual states settle over a person (just like with the rising of the sun in the east the world becomes apparent). And the west resembles *qabz* (in view of the setting of the sun

cloaking everything in darkness). Thus the portrait of the east and west is to be found in a human being as well.

And just as the sun becomes hidden in the west, it does not become non-existent, similarly, one's spiritual excellences do not become non-existent due to *qabz*; these merely become hidden. Then with *bast* the excellences reappear.

Summary

The summary of everything that has been said is that there are a few mandatory practices of the Ahl Sulook mentioned here, namely, Qiyaamul Lail which is Tahajjud, Tilaawat of the Qur'aan (with tarteel), Tableegh of the Deen, Zikr, Tabattul and Tawakkul.

Relations with Friends and Foes

Then there are two relationships with others. One is with friends and supporters. This has been alluded to in: ***"Indeed you have plenty of work during the day."*** Disseminating the Deen, and providing spiritual training and guidance are the objects mentioned here. This is in view of the relationship with friends being one of love and affection. By virtue of the natural love and affection with friends the rights and duties of this type of relationship are spontaneously fulfilled. Hence, this was not spoken of at length and force here.

The dealing with adversaries again quite possibly results in excesses and inadequacies being perpetrated. Thus, the conduct relevant here was mentioned with importance and at length.

"Be patient over what they say and leave them with beautiful conduct."

The meaning of this is that one should exercise patience over the problems caused by adversaries and their infliction of harm. Leave them with decorum. Let not the flame of animosity burn out of control and one ends up inflicting even more harm upon them.

Hajr Jameel (in the Aayat) means dissociating in such a manner that one does not feel distressed.

Revenge by Allah

With the teaching of Sabr Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was then consoled by Allah Ta'ala declaring that He will take revenge:

"And leave to Me those in denial; those who bask in pleasures. Give them a short period of grace."

In other words: "Leave this matter with your opponents to Me. We will take revenge in full". It is the timeless way of Allah Ta'ala to take revenge from the adversaries of the Ahl Haq. Thus, it is only appropriate to exercise Sabr because when there is someone more powerful than one to take revenge then why worry? According to this Timeless Way of Allah Ta'ala the adversaries are disgraced in this world and in the Hereafter.

We have seen many a time the consequence

Of this delay in deliverance

Whoever interfered with the Ahlullah

Was seized by the Wrath of Allah

Allah has not disgraced a nation

As long as they did not hurt the heart of a saintly-person

Conclusion

In conclusion, the programme for the Ahl Tasawwuf which is mentioned in the Aayaat recited consists of Qiyaamul Lail which is Tahajjud, Tilaawat of the Qur'aan (with tarteel), Tableegh-e-Deen, Zikr, Tabattul and Tawakkul.

This bayaan covers fully and comprehensively the spiritual programme of the Ahl Tasawwuf, through the Fadhl of Allah Ta'ala. It is thus appropriately titled, *Seeratus Soofi*.

THE CURE OF THE QUR'AAN

Allah Ta'ala says in the Qur'aan Majeed:

"O Mankind! Admonition, cure for spiritual sicknesses, guidance and mercy for the Mu-mineen have come to you from your Rabb." (Surah Younus, 57)

Here Allah Ta'ala has described four attributes of the Qur'aan Majeed, viz. admonition, cure, guidance and mercy. Admonition is speech which serves to stop evil acts. Cure is the fruits of that. In other words the result and fruits of following the admonition is that the sickness of the heart will be cured.

A rule of Tasawwuf is educed here. It is apparent that we are caught up in sin. And day and night we commit wrongs. However, in this trial there are two groups of people. One group are those who commit sin and they are impervious to it. The other group are those who are affected by the commission of sin. Although we slip up and commit sin, but *Alhamdulillah*, we are not spiritually-blind; unable to see the path. *Alhamdulillah*, Allah Ta'ala has given us spiritual eyes, although at times through the influence and schemes of the *nafs* we do not utilize our spiritual eyes.

With these spiritual eyes we clearly see that when a sin is committed a sickness afflicts the heart. In regard to this sickness Allah Ta'ala states:

"In fact, the effects of their actions have settled over their hearts." (Surah Mutaffifeen, 14)

The Hadeeth Shareef furthermore explains this in this manner that when a person sins then a black spot develops over his heart. If he makes *taubah* then it is effaced, otherwise it expands.

Shaitaan's Master-Plot

In short, the peculiarity of sinning is that it causes the heart to become sick. If this is not remedied then the sickness deteriorates. Some Saalikeen have been victims to extraordinary deception here and this still occurs. Shaitaan makes them inclined to sinning. But their Quwwat (Strength) of Imaan keeps them in check. They thus refrain from sinning. However, Shaitaan is much more educated. When he sees that he has not achieved his end in this way then he cloaks the sin in the garb of

Deen. In this particular case he deceives a person with the notion that if the sin is not indulged in then forever this will hurt the person, whilst a one-off commission will smother the desire and then one will be at rest. Even intelligent and understanding people are caught in this. But Allah Ta'ala has bestowed a *Mu-min-e-Kaamil* (a Perfect Believer) a *Noor* through which he sees the snares and subtle plots of Shaitaan. He thus uncovers this master-plot of Shaitaan. Hence it comes in the Hadeeth Shareef that a Faqeeh is sterner on Shaitaan than a thousand ordinary *Aabids* (pious worshippers).

The Errors of the Saalikeen

This is the error the Saalikeen make. The errors of the Saalikeen actually run very deep. Thus one Buzrug states: "You fear sinning whereas we fear kufr." This path (of Tasawwuf) is delicate. Safety is in shunning one's personal views and rather entrusting oneself to an accomplished (Muhaqqiq) Shaikh. Otherwise the harm will be like that which befell one person who in spite of the Shar'i injunction of not going near to *zina*, told himself: "I can only save myself from this constant urge of *zina* if I fulfil the desire once." The fool was blissfully unaware that the sickness is aggravated in this manner. 'Kissing' and 'Caressing' provide no cure. These make the condition even worse. This fool thinks that by watering a tree its roots will become soft and weak and then it can be uprooted with ease. Whereas by watering the roots go further into the ground and become more secure.

By sinning this person thinks that his heart is now at ease, whereas he does not understand that previously the sin was on the outskirts of his heart and hence the perception of it. But now

it has penetrated the arteries of the heart and thus imperceptible. When the occasion arises it will surface with force and violently. This person does not understand that now (whilst the desire is in its initial stages) it can be removed with ease; afterwards it will be difficult.

The Heart Cured

To summarize, sin – big or small – makes the heart sick. So Allah Ta'ala says that by carrying out the admonition of the Qur'aan Majeed sickness of the heart will be cured.

(Wa'z As-Suroor)

TABLEEGH

(Addressing a gathering consisting of mostly students of the Deen – Talabah – and teachers – Asaatizah, Hazrat Thanwi, Rahmatullahi alaih, said):

Like Namaaz and Roza (Salaat and Saum), Tableegh is also Fardh. However, the ways of Tableegh fluctuate with the circumstances. For instance, your learning (O Students) is also Tableegh provided that your intention is good, for ***"Actions are judged according to intentions."*** If your intention is to make *Amr bil ma'roof* having completed your studies then this course of study is a branch of Tableegh. If this is not your intention then your learning is not Tableegh.

Consider a person who makes no intention when offering Namaaz. He is not credited with any Namaaz. Similarly, if a

person does not make intention of Roza but stays the whole day away from food, there is no Roza for him.

It is astonishing that we learn and teach day-in and day-out but due to not having the intention of *A'maal and Taa'aat* (good deeds and acts of obedience unto Allah Ta'ala) we are deprived of reward. Thus, with a good intention learning these kitaabs in these times is undoubtedly a branch of Tableegh.

The Need for the Current System of Deeni Education

I said, "In these times," because the illustrious Sahaabah and Taabi'een were not in need of the educational methods of today. They achieved the objective without the system of education today. Their memories and minds were par excellence and they were devout. The system in place now is necessary for this reason that if kitaabs were not compiled, and considering that retentive abilities are at a low, not to mention the lack of faithfulness to the Deen, the statements and words of those teaching the Deen would not be trusted. Speaking out of memory, listeners would not be satisfied. They would be in doubt as to whether the one imparting Hadeeth and Fiqh is speaking correctly or speaking all muddled.

If kitaabs were not compiled there would have been a complete mix up. There would be corruption and interpolation in the Deen. It is a great favour of Allah Ta'ala that he instituted the compilation of kitaabs, established Madaaris and provided the necessary means for the running of these institutions.

Among the means for the running of these institutions is the collection of funds for the Madrasahs, but on the proviso that the

funds donated are with a happy heart. Without the compilation of kitaabs the statements of the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) would not have reached us and without the Madrasahs these kitaabs would not be taught.

Teaching and Learning the Madrasah Curriculum is an August Branch of Tableegh

Thus, in view of the necessity of these avenues it is established that this is not a bid'at, in fact it is a Sunnat because the purpose here is also Tableegh, whether it is direct Tableegh or indirect. Directly the Tableegh is to the students and indirectly to the public. Thus, the teaching and learning of these kitaabs is an august branch of Tableegh, yet we are deprived of its thawaab for not intending Tableegh. Therefore, the Mudarriseen and Talabah (teachers and students) should have intention of Tableegh.

If Tableegh is sub-divided into three divisions; one: Tableegh of the Fundamentals and Tenets of Islam to the kuffaar, the second: Tableegh of the particulars that is, the Masaail of the Deen to the general Muslim public, and three: to prepare a group to competently make Tableegh then teaching and learning are palpably part of Tableegh.

Allocation of Responsibility in Tableegh

Now, since there are departments of Tableegh it does not follow that every person involves himself in all three departments. In fact, allocation of responsibility is necessary. Thus, the various branches should be entrusted to specific individuals. In other words, in proportion to ability and competency responsibility

should be allocated as every person is not competent at everything.

Sharing responsibility of the departments of Tableegh is furthermore understood from the Qur'aan Majeed. Allah Ta'ala says:

***"It is not appropriate for all the Mu-mineen to go out (in Jihaad). Why not a group from every region go out…"* (Surah Anfaal, 122)**

Here Allah Ta'ala has condemned every one going out in Jihaad. He says: One group should go out in Jihaad and a group should stay behind to study the Deen. This Aayat does not discuss who should do what. In other words who should go out in Jihaad and who should stay behind to study? Nevertheless, what it does state is that the work of Deen should be allocated. In like manner, since Tableegh has different departments, some should attend to one department whilst others should look after another. All should not jump into one department for this will erode the foundation of Deen.

And I maintain that whatever you do, carry it out under the guidance of your senior. Your seniors will lay down what each person should do. Whoever they instruct to study, should study; whoever they instruct to conduct activities in the field of popular Tableegh, they should become a *muballigh*. Then whatever sphere of Tableegh is entrusted to you, fulfil its duties. For example, some will be advised to provide financial support, some physical help, some the work of writing and authoring books. Therefore, do not think that these are not Tableegh. All

these avenues are branches of Tableegh, for the preliminaries of Tableegh are incorporated to Tableegh. Thus the donor is also a *muballigh*, the lecturer is also a *muballigh*, and the writer of articles is also a *muballigh*.

To illustrate this point: A person is asked, "How much do you spend for your food?" He will say, "X amount of money". Then he will go into the details; the cost of the meat, dry spices, the rice, the oil, the firewood used to cook the food, etc. Now the one asking will not reject the cost of the firewood being included, otherwise he will be told that he is a fool. Since the meal cannot be prepared without a fire (or gas or electricity as in our times) the cost of this is included in the cost of the meal. This is readily understood in our day-to-day life. It is furthermore established by the Principles of the Shariah. It is an established principle that the preliminaries of something are incorporated to the principal objective. Thus, Allah Ta'ala states:

"Aid and assist each other in righteousness and faithfulness." (Surah Maaidah, 2)

Thus, assisting is also included in righteousness because it helps to produce the injunction which is an act of righteousness.

Be that as it may, there are several services to be carried out in the Field of Tableegh. Therefore, one group should spread the teachings of Deen; one group should provide financial help to them, and so forth.

I have reiterated this point because when it comes to work we go beyond the limits. We all flow with the tide. Thus I fear that speaking on the virtues of Tableegh the *Mudarriseen and*

Talabah will abandon their teaching and studying. Ask your seniors what you should do; whether you are fit for Tableegh or better capable for teaching.

In short, do not do anything unilaterally. Otherwise, instead of any good there will be corruption because I see those Talabah who are not even qualified with their studies jumping on the Tableegh bandwagon. In my opinion they should firstly complete their studies. This is of prior importance. If this studying and teaching are abandoned then all Tableegh and writing, etc. will be in vain. The reason for this is that such persons will be incompetent. And the 'tableegh' of an incompetent person is worthless. In fact, if this carries on (students devote themselves to Tableegh instead of their studies) then in a short time our heritage of Ilm will be lost. Thus, the education in the Madaaris is also a branch of Tableegh. (From *Aadaabut Tableegh*)

Amr Bil Ma'roof

It is observed nowadays that people do not want to make Amr Bil Ma'roof – command righteousness. Leave alone the general public even the Ulama are not interested in this. Then there are two groups of Ulama; one is the group who are not Mashaaikh. We won't say anything about them because the public does not view them with much esteem. Those who are 'mashaaikh', leaders of the times and people hold them in esteem, the most neglect is shown by them. For them merely taking a Tasbeeh and sitting is sufficient to reach Jannat. They are not interested in

correcting anyone. In fact, they consider it to be the antithesis of being a Khalifah. If a Khalifah starts telling people what is right and what is wrong he is expelled from the list of Buzrugs and considered a mere Molvi.

Once, I went to Ilahabad to visit my father who was not well. There was a durwaish (dervish) there. My father took me to meet this durwaish. When he saw me he asked me to explain the meaning of this Aayat: ***"For every nation We have laid down a way of zabah (slaughtering an animal) which it follows. Therefore, they should not argue with you in this matter." (Surah Haj, 67)***

I translated the Aayat. The Durwaish Saheb said: "See! Allah Ta'ala forbids arguing. So we should not tell people to do this and not to do that. Whoever wants to do anything let him do it; what business do we have with their affairs?"

This was his 'tafseer' of the Aayat. At that time I could not recall any specific Tafseer. I responded to him with the obvious words. "Allah Ta'ala says that *they* should not argue with you; He does not say that *you* should not dispute with them. In fact, for Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) the injunction is which appears immediately thereafter: ***'And call to the Path of your Rabb for verily you are on (the path of) correct guidance.'***

In other words there are two types of people. One: those who are on baatil; they are astray. The second are those who are on *Siraatul Mustaqeem*. So, Allah Ta'ala states that the Ahl Baatil have no right to dispute with the Ahl Haq. Thus, the gist of the Aayat is that you (O Muhammad) are on *Siraatul Mustaqeem*.

Therefore, you have the right to dispute, that is, call them to the correct way. But they have no right to argue with you."

I told him: "Here Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is not being instructed not to dispute with them; on the contrary, they (those on the wrong path) are instructed not to dispute with Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa salaam)."

Shah Saheb started gaping and he was dumfounded. My father was also very pleased with my response.

Amr Bil Ma'roof and Not Hurting Anyone

But it is lamentable to see that nowadays the meaning of being a Buzrug is considered to be that one should not say anything to anyone; one should make peace with everyone. They consider this to be saintliness. One should not hurt anyone; one should not trouble anyone. So one should not make Amr Bil Ma'roof!!!

If this is the case then one should not tell a haughty person anything. One should not hurt his feelings and one should let everyone do as they please. General permission should be granted for everyone to do as they please. Then open zina should be tolerated, robbery, murder; everything should be condoned!

If you say that in robbery and murder people are hurt therefore these are prohibited according to the precept of not hurting anyone then it can be argued that zina doesn't hurt anyone. And if it is contended that the husband or father is hurt, then where a woman does not have a father or any family member and she voluntary submits to this vile act then who is hurt in this case?

In fact, the meaning of not hurting anyone is to wilfully hurt someone. And when someone wishes to correct a wrong or disease as a result of which the other party is hurt, such as a surgeon performing an operation to remove an infected tissue or a dentist extracting a rotten tooth or a father disciplining a delinquent child then these are not considered hurting others.

If not hurting anyone is accepted universally then why restrict it to those that are present. What about hurting the feelings and hearts of people in absentia? Just as 'hurting' is given such a wide meaning, give the afflicted person a general application. And when taking a broad meaning for the aggrieved persons then there isn't a sin which does not hurt someone or the other.

Whose Heart Does the Sinner Hurt?

And don't think that your sinning does not hurt anyone. Just think over this incident. Mirza Bedal the poet used to compose poems of a Tasawwuf-hue. An Iranian took a liking to his poems. Believing him to be a Buzrug the Iranian came to visit him. When he arrived Mirza Bedal was having the barber shave his face. This infuriated the Iranian and he said angrily: "Hazrat! You're shaving your beard!?"

The poet (Mirza Bedal) responded: "Yes, I'm shaving my beard; but I'm not shaving (i.e. hurting) anyone's heart." The visitor was a sincere person. He stated openly: "What! Aren't you shaving the heart of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)!?"

A sincere person does not look at expediency. His gaze is on the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala only.

The poet responded according to customary 'tasawwuf' and customary social etiquette that he was not hurting the heart of

anyone. The Iranian responded: You Zaalim! You are shredding the Greatest of Hearts and claiming that you are not hurting anyone's heart! In fact, you are hurting the heart of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). Your razor is being stroked over the Blessed Heart of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). When the actions of his Ummah are presented to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and it is said that one of your Ummati shaves his face, will this not hurt the heart of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)?

Hurting the heart of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is not a trivial matter. His heart is Sayyidul Quloob – the King of all hearts. How can you claim not to be hurting anyone when you are hurting Sayyidul Quloob? You are really hurting someone's heart.

Hearing this Mirza's eyes popped out. He gave a scream and fell unconscious. Upon regaining consciousness he made taubah (he repented) and he said either expressly or by implication: "Jazaakallah! You have opened my eyes and united me with my beloved."

In other words: I was blind. My gaze never fell on this that I was hurting the heart of such a great person. I never ever thought about this. You have shown me my error. May Allah Ta'ala reward you.

Now you must understand from this incident that when you do anything against the Shariah, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) will be hurt or not? Thus it is all nonsense to say that we should not hurt anybody's feelings by making Amr Bil Ma'roof when they violate the Ahkaam of the Shariah.

The instruction of Amr Bil Ma'roof is clearly stated in the *Nusoos* (Qur'aan and Sunnah). Abandoning it is reproached. This is what we know for sure. Therefore carry out this instruction.

In short, Amr Bil Ma'roof is absolutely *waajib*. But we see that people are not interested in it. This is a grave inconsistency.

(*Aadaabut Tableegh* by Hazrat Thanwi, Rahmatullahi Alaih)

FREE TIME

"And when some shameless deed is committed by them (the Muttaqeen) or they wrong themselves then they remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins."

(Surah Aali Imraan, 135)

Remembering Allah Ta'ala

In other words, after sinning they think about the greatness and the chastisement of Allah Ta'ala. *"Remembering Allah Ta'ala"* as the Aayat conveys means to remember His greatness or His chastisement. And, truly the greatness of Allah Ta'ala is such that one can never sin by remembering it. It is really worthy of remembering. Thus, to forget about it and to resolve to sin takes extreme audacity.

Some people expect to make Taubah and make amends after finishing a certain act, whereas it is possible that one does not get the time due to a preponderance of occupations. Therefore, one should treasure the opportunity and free time available now.

Treasure These Things

Once it has been understood that by meditating on the greatness and the punishment of Allah Ta'ala one gets the *taufeeq* to make Taubah, now it is worthwhile considering that one requires free time to do this meditation.

Some people do not appreciate their free time, whereas it is an exceptionally great treasure. The Hadeeth Shareef states: ***"Treasure five things before five things."*** One of the five things is: ***"Your free time before you become busy."***

By observing people who are loaded with work one can appreciate free time. Those who are caught in a rat race are in *museebat* (adversity and headache). They do not get free time to meditate. Their condition is as portrayed in this poem:

> ***When they go to sleep, they go to sleep with their head heavy***
>
> ***When they wake up, they wake up dizzy***

Free time is wonderful. Do not augment your desires and kill your free time. If you have sufficient wealth for your needs, then utilize the balance of your time for your Aakhirat.

The second thing mentioned in the same Hadeeth is: ***"Your health before you become sick."***

The third is: ***"Your youth before you become old."***

Another Hadeeth states: ***"Whoever finds himself in the morning safe, healthy and with provisions for the day has in effect accumulated whatever the world has to offer."***

This is true as a person, even if he is rich, can only consume for a day, a day's food. Thus, such a person and a pauper who has only provision for a day are equal.

How much of the ocean can be filled in one jar? Similarly, how much food can be filled in a stomach? Even though a wealthy person has a pantry-full of foodstuffs, he can only digest roughly the amount a poor man can digest. If one has food and clothes to cover one's body then every pore of your body is a king.

An incident has come to light of a rich man going to view his treasury which was in a cellar. He opened several doors of the treasury to admire his riches. He bided his time there whilst his attendants came to lock the main door of the treasury. They were unaware of their master being inside. The cellar was huge with many chambers, doors and gates. This rich man was very far inside where his voice could not reach those at the main door. In short, this Yahoodi died there among his gold, silver and jewels out of hunger and thirst.

If someone had to ask him at that time he would have acknowledged that a few crumbs and a glass of water are more precious than all his riches.

Similarly, there is another story of a hungry person in the wilderness finding a pouch of gold coins. He threw the pouch away and lamented that it was not a pouch of some food which could be consumed.

In short, free time, health and basic necessities are things to treasure. These do not stay with one always. Take care of these. Don't waste your free time. Be quick in making Taubah.

(By Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi in *Istikhfaaful Ma'aasi*)

PLEASURE AND COMFORT

Some people do not make *taubah* flirting with the *Rahmat* and *Maghfirat* (Mercy and Forgiveness) of Allah Ta'ala, whereas the Ahadeeth on Allah Ta'ala's *Rahmat* and *Maghfirat* are for the prospective repentant not to become despondent. Hence it has been said: "Revert, revert, whatever you are, revert! If you are an infidel, fire-worshipper, idol-worshipper then too, revert! This Portal of Ours is not a portal of despondency. Even if you have broken your taubah a hundred times, then too, revert!"

The narrations of Allah Ta'ala's *Rahmat* and *Maghfirat* are not for one to become audacious and shameless; for one to become further emboldened to commit sin. On the contrary, being apprised of the kindness and mercy of Allah demands that one becomes touched and one turns to even more *Taa'at* and obedience, not that one becomes audacious, blasphemous and disobedient.

In this regard we see that in this world when one person does something good to another then greater love and obedience is shown to the benefactor, not opposition and rebellion.

The thought may creep into some minds that, "really the demand should be as outlined above, but another demand – the pleasure of the sin – dominates the other demand. Thus we find much enjoyment and pleasure in sins. The difficulty in leaving sins is for this reason." However, if anyone has sound perception he

will understand the fallacy of this notion. The pleasure in sinning is similar to the pleasure one who has scabies gets when itching. There is really no pleasure in this itching; the perceived pleasure is on account of a skin disorder. The slight pleasure is transformed into a burning and painful sensation.

So this is a sickness, like a person bitten by a snake finds even bitter things to be sweet. So no intelligent person will submit to such treatment to make everything sweet for his taste. True pleasure, however, is in *Taa'at*. Since these sinners have not yet tasted the sweetness of Deeds of the Aakhirat, of abstinence from the dunya and of *Taa'at*, therefore sin and carnal pleasures seem appealing to them.

Ask Hazrat Ibraheem Bin Adham about the pleasure in the Deeds of the Aakhirat and in abstinence from this world. How did he forsake the pleasure of his kingdom craving instead for the pleasure of the Aakhirat?

Hazrat Umar Bin Abdul Azeez discarded royal garments and sufficed with a poor man's garments out of that pleasure.

The Sultaan of Sanjar wished to grant Shaikh Abdul Qaadir Jeelaani the Land of Neemroz as a gift. In response Shaikh Abdul Qaadir wrote these verses:

> **Like the flags of Sanjar let my face be gloomy**
>
> **If for the Land of Sanjar I have craving any**
>
> **Since I learned of the Kingdom of the Nightly**
>
> **I do not desire to purchase the Land of Neemroz for even a grain of barley**

To look at the Beloved in peace for a moment only

Is better than the day long surveillance of the kingly

The prince experienced after years thirty

That being occupied with Allah for a moment is better than Sulaimaan's Monarchy

The reason for this is that these luxuries and comforts are in fact *athaab* on the self. Thus Allah Ta'ala declares:

"Do not let their wealth and their offspring enamour you. Allah wishes to inflict athaab on them with these in this world." (Surah Taubah, 55, 85)

Firstly, it is not within one's power to obtain these things (money and large family) according to one's wishes. And even if these are obtained then being occupied and tied to these things is another *athaab*.

In fact, comfort is only in connecting oneself to Allah Ta'ala. ***"Listen! Only with the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala do hearts find comfort." (Surah Ra'd, 28)***

The Root Cause of Troubles

These troubles are connected to private lives. Then there are troubles which are spread to others. As a consequence of the disobedience of sinners a host of sicknesses, viruses, epidemics, conflicts, etc. are produced. Although these sicknesses have certain external and physical causes, sins are the real and primary causes, however. There is no contradiction in this, for the punishment can be for sinning, whilst the manifestation of the punishment is in the form of the external cause of the sickness.

And since sins are not considered to be the cause of the sicknesses, hence only medical treatment is resorted to. The actual treatment which is *Istighfaar* (seeking forgiveness for one's sins) is not implemented. This treatment should also be undertaken.

A calamity being the consequence of sins is proven from the Qur'aan and Hadeeth. The Qur'aan says:

"Whatever museebat (calamity) befalls you is on account of your own wrongdoing." (Surah Shoora, 30)

A buzrug got onto his horse. The horse started misbehaving. The buzrug remarked: "I have committed a sin today and hence this horse is being disobedient."

It is a fact that whoever searches out the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, everything becomes easy for him. In summary, it is established that *Taa'at* produces comfort whilst sinning produces discomfort and distress.

(Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi in *Istikhfaaful Ma'aasi*)

BIG SIN, SMALL SIN?

"You think it to be small, whereas in the Sight of Allah it is grave." (Surah Noor, Aayat 15)

This Aayat condemns thinking of a particular sin to be trivial. The Aayat was revealed in connection with the episode in which the Munaafiqeen, and some innocent Muslims caught up in the

gossip slandered, Hazrat Aishah (Radhiyallahu anha). They are warned over thinking of it to be light.

Now we should ponder over whether thinking of only that sin to be light, as the revelation suggests, or thinking of any major sin to be light is condemned as evil. Reflection reveals that the reproach is not confined to any particular sin. The particular circumstances of the revelation do not limit the censure in the Aayat.

In so far as Allah Ta'ala saying that it is 'grave' in His Sight then, understand that any sin, irrespective of it being a minor sin, is in actual fact grave. The reason for this is that the nature of sin is disobedience to Allah Ta'ala Jalla Jalaaluhu (Sublime is His magnificence). And it is obvious that disobedience, regardless of its kind, is evil.

The stages of sin – major and minor – are relative issues. It merely means that one sin is very bad whilst another is less evil. Otherwise, in actual fact every sin is grave. No sin should be treated lightly.

The relative issues of small and big, here, are like the sky and earth being small in relation to the Arsh. But in actual fact the sky and earth are not small.

Another example is that of dirt and *najaasat*. Dirt can be minor or major. When it is major it is termed *najaasat*. But both are dirt.

And the *raison d'être* for this gravity in both major and minor sins is that the greater a person's magnificence and beneficence the graver is disobedience to that person. It is obvious that no one's magnificence and beneficence are comparable to Allah

Ta'ala's magnificence and beneficence. Thus, disobedience to Him is deplorable in the extreme. Therefore, disobedience to Allah Ta'ala by its very nature and demand is grave.

The demand of the above is that no sin be committed. However, there are several reasons for this lapse. Some sins are considered to be 'minor' and thus committed, whereas on the basis of the very *raison d'être* mentioned the Fuqaha have declared that to trifle with any sin is kufr, be it a minor sin.

In sum, every act of disobedience unto Allah Ta'ala is grave. From this angle the reproach in the Aayat covers every type of sin.

Sin is like fire. A small flame is sufficient to burn out a house just as a blaze is. The flame is small and the blaze is big. Thus the question of whether the sin is small or big suggests that if it is 'big' one will stay clear of it, but if it is 'small' one will see. We will ask such a person if he consents to a flame being ignited to his curtain. If this is intolerable to him then how can disobedience to Allah Ta'ala be tolerable? The small flame will build up to become a raging fire.

Similarly, a person persists with a minor sin. By persistent indulgence in a minor sin the sin becomes major. In other words, some people continue sinning, thinking that afterwards they will make Taubah. This is a serious error. Once sinning becomes habitual then Taubah becomes difficult for such a person. The reason for this is that it is easy to make Taubah from a new sin which has not yet become embedded in one. But to make Taubah from a sin which has become one's habit is problematic.

Together with that, when a person does not abstain from a 'small' sin then such a person becomes audacious. He then feels no inhibition in committing sin. He gradually perpetrates major sins then. This is like care is taken not to dirty clean clothes. But if the clothes have become gradually soiled then a person worries not of the clothes becoming further soiled. The whole garment then becomes soiled.

The case with sinning is the same. Once sinning becomes a habit it is left and it becomes worse. For example, purchases on interest have become common among people. People habitually back bite others. Trust funds are abused without compunction. Friendship with members of the opposite sex is the norm. Just observe how these sins are committed without reservation. But many of the same sinners won't drink beer. The difference is because of the habit having being formed in the case of the former, not with the latter. All this confirms that from becoming a habit persistence and thinking light of the sin are the consequence. In fact, the matter can become as serious as thinking of the sin to be good. In other words, not even thinking of it to be a sin, like the case with television. Then it is rare for a person to make Taubah.

And the rote Taubah that is made is of no merit. Someone said:

Tasbeeh in the hand

Taubah on the tongue

But the heart brimming with the delight of sins

Our sins just laugh at our repentance

For this reason there is no substance to our Taubah with our wanton transgression. We think that abandoning those sins will bring disgrace and indigence upon us. We do not feel bad at committing the sins, whereas the sign of Imaan is:

"When your good deed brings you joy and your evil action makes you feel bad." (Hadeeth)

In short, these are some reasons why we find it difficult to make an honest Taubah. And all this establishes that it is foolish to continue sinning in the hope of making Taubah later. But some stupid people still labour under deception and audaciously sin thinking that they will make amends with Taubah. The similitude of such people is like a person has a balm and feeling covered he burns his fingers in a fire. Is this person not an absolute fool? Did any intelligent person ever do such a foolish thing? When audaciousness is not displayed with this fire then the Fire of Jahannam is seventy times more intense then this fire on earth!

The balm for a burn is fully in one's possession. And although Taubah is ostensibly volitional, but it is not 100% in one's control like the balm for a burn. The reason for this is that the nature of Taubah is: ***"Taubah is becoming ashamed." (Hadeeth)***

It is also interpreted as follows: It eats up one when doing wrong and leaves the heart distressed when sinning. Thus, Taubah is the aching and burning of the heart.

It is known that aching is a feeling which is not in one's volition. This begs the question: Since Taubah is non-volitional then why

have we been instructed to make Taubah, whereas Allah Ta'ala does not impose upon anyone that which is not in his or hers volition? The answer to this question is that there are two types of volition; one is the volition directly associated with an article, and one is the volition pertaining to the means of the intended article. So Taubah is volitional as its means is volitional. The means is to meditate over the magnificence, honour and retribution of Allah Ta'ala. By doing this it is the Timeless Way of Allah Ta'ala that such feeling of remorse overtakes the heart which is in actual fact Taubah. Thus, *Toobu* (make Taubah) is commanded. (Modified from *Istikhfaaful Ma'aasi*)

CUSTOMS AND INNOVATIONS

The harms in these customs are that realities have become effaced. Furthermore, these customs are the innovations of the Ahl Bid'ah; and the peculiarity of bid'at is that it leaves no Noor in the heart and no Noor of perception leaving a person trapped in such wrongs. Thus you will find all the arguments of the Ahl Bid'ah merely self-gratifying. But a person, who has even the slightest perception of reality, can never accept their proofs, so much so that even though he may not have any counter-argument in mind, but his heart repels their averments.

If these customs were confined to worldly activities, then there would not have been such a case against the customs. But the misfortune is that customs have been attached to Deen. Thus, one major-harm of these customs is that people carry them out thinking these to be part of Deen. In their entire lives they are not

alerted to their error; they continue to think of something which is not Deen, to be an act of Deen.

In worldly customs, sometimes some worldly harm comes to the fore and there is possibility of the custom being abandoned. For example, the harmful and destructive consequences of customs in vogue on the occasion of Nikaah stare the perpetrators in the face. This alerts them and though not out of understanding it to be harmful to their Deen, nevertheless out of realizing the harm to their dunya they abandon the custom. However, how can they be alerted to the harms of the customs they consider to be part of Deen? In fact, there is strong reason for them not being alerted to the harm due to the festivity and revelry in these customs. They enjoy themselves at these functions. Then why should they abandon these practices?

We have had the good fortune of spending time in the company of such people who never observed any custom. Their lives were plain and simple. Observing their lives it has dawned fully upon us that a life of comfort is that which is free of formalities, extravagance and show.

Kandhlah is a town near to where we stay. There was a Buzrug there by the name of Moulana Muzaffar Husain Saheb. When a visitor would come he would ask the visitor: “Did you have meals or would you like to have meals with us?” If the guest answered that he would have meals there, then Moulana used to ask: “Should we prepare fresh meals or serve whatever leftover we have?” If the guest desired freshly cooked food, he would then ask: “What do you prefer?” Whatever the guest enjoyed

would then be prepared. Now isn’t there comfort and ease in this?

Since we have seen such people the formalities of people nowadays hold no worth in our eyes. The formalities and customs of these times are pure acts of show and extravagance and which reek of harmful consequences. If a *dunya-daar* (worldly inclined person) abandons these customs and instead opts for a life of simplicity, then leaving aside immunity from sin, he will not suffer and destroy his mundane life. Look at how many a principality have been destroyed on account of these extravagances.

Many complain about these extravagances, but few really abandon these wasteful customs. A person should only stretch his legs as long as his legs are. But this is not possible in these customs and functions. Everyone should unite to discard these customs.

A simple life is a wonderful boon. And halaal income only provides for a simple life. These extravaganzas are possible only with haraam income.

Due to the lavishness of these times, teachings such as these are regarded to be insulting. The culture of today is to be up-class, haughty, above everyone. A worker or employee is not even considered to be a human being. In everything the effort is to portray one’s status, one’s prestige and one’s extravagance. New clothes, new fashions are necessarily adopted. All these accretions and attachments are nothing but the products of being proud. Then these self-same habits are passed on to juniors and kids until it is endemic to society. In all spheres of life –

speaking, eating, sitting, walking – extravagance pervades the lives of society.

The Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum) were not upholders of customary formalities, but the level of their obedience to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is known to the world. The bond which the Sahaabah had with Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was of passionate love; a similar case between a lover and beloved in this world will be difficult to find. But there was no incumbency of even standing when Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) entered. In fact, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) forbade them from this.

In his clothing, in his seating and in his ways Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) did not adopt a superior position. Consider that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was not particular on being in front of everyone when walking. Sometimes he would be walking alongside, sometimes behind. The custom of these times would have demanded that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) be ahead of everyone. Reflect over who are more committed to their seniors: the mureedeen of these times to their Shaikhs or the Sahaabah to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)? Experience teaches that where there is external show, there is no reality there.

(From *Adabul Asheer* of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi Rahmatullahi Alaih)

TAQLEED AND IJTIHAAD

There are certain requisites for the Ahkaam (rules and principles) of Ijtihaad to be applicable to a person and for one to be a Mujtahid. The gist of the requisites is developing an exceptional affinity with the Shariah by virtue of which the Qur'aan and Hadeeth texts can be readily examined for being related to cause or unrelated, and one can understand the procedures of their import and preference. This type of Ijtihaad is closed. By knowing the daleel (proof) of any mas-alah a person does not become a Muhaqqiq (expert) in that mas-alah. Thus, such a person cannot abandon adherence to a Muhaqqiq (i.e. Taqleed of a Mujtahid).

This is just as any person can become proficient as a Muhaddith; however, par excellence this has terminated with certain special individuals of this Ummah. In this day and age there is no Muhaddith living. ***"And that is the fadhl of Allah Ta'ala which he bestows to whomever He wishes."***

Such blatant errors are committed by those who claim nowadays to possess the ability to make Ijtihaad and refer directly to the Qur'aan and Hadeeth that every person's conscience accepts their error. In all truth the Aimmah Mujtahideen really understood the true nature of Deen. Thus, those who abandon Taqleed voice themselves against the Aimmah Mujtahideen when in reality their judgements are in violation of Deen itself. The motive is simply unfettered personal opinion and following of carnal desires. Everyone knows that vanity is destructive.

Whoever wishes let them observe. These two diseases are found to pulsate in the blood and veins of those who abandon Taqleed.

Our knowledge is nothing. Why did those who are senior to us and whose knowledge is recognized make Taqleed? Our opinion and our discretion are prone to error and highly questionable.

When unshackling oneself of *Taqleed-e-Shakhsi* (following of an Imam or Math-hab) the inevitable consequence is that such a person quickly slips into the quagmire of emancipation of his *nafs*. In the opinion of some of these deviates nothing can be established without Nass (textual evidence). They reject Ijtihaad (eduction of masaa-il), whereas there is ample evidence of Ijtihaad in Hadeeth literature.

Consider the natural affinity of Ijtihaad of Hazrat Umar Faarooq (Radhiyallahu anhu) who was so sure of himself that he stopped Hazrat Abu Hurairah (Radhiyallahu anhu) from passing on the *bashaarat* (glad tiding) of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). And his barring of this glad tiding was sanctioned by Allah Ta'ala. At face value the opinion of Hazrat Umar carries no weight against the express statement of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and can never be given preference. But, his aptitude to soundly judge issues made him conclude, that the glad tiding would disrupt and bring chaos to the Deen of the masses.

In spite of Hazrat Abu Hurairah providing evidence of him being sent by Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) with the task of announcing the glad tiding, Hazrat Umar forcefully and unhesitatingly stopped him by slapping him on his chest and flooring him. When this case was brought before Rasoolullah

(Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) why did Rasoolullah not criminalise Hazrat Umar? This episode is axiomatic proof of Ijtihaad and the correctness of the methodology of the Fuqaha. This is not a shaky ground.

The Mujtahideen did not lay the foundation of Deen on concocted masaail. They are free of every vestige of self-opinion. Just as they make others confined to the Shariah, they too, confine themselves with the Ahkaam. They do not utter anything without proof from the Qur'aan or Hadeeth. Thus, Taqleed of them is Taqleed of the Qur'aan and Hadeeth.

This is just like a learner of Sarf and Nahw (branches of Arabic grammar) firstly is a muqallid of Akhfash and Seebwaih (two renowned grammarians of the Arabic language), whereas they did not initiate the language. They, too, are muqallids of the Arabs. The one studying Sarf and Nahw is in actual fact a muqallid of the people of the language. What an error it is to aver that a muqallid of the Fuqaha is not following the Qur'aan and Hadeeth whilst condoning the taqleed of Akhfash and Seebwaih and not expelling such a muqallid from following of the Arabic language. These are points to remember. They do not come to mind just anytime.

A Great Benefit

They feel ashamed to be labelled as followers. Well, let them find embarrassment in following the Aimmah Mujtahideen. We prefer to remain under the authority of Imam Abu Haneefah, our parents and the Shaikh of Tareeqat. It may vex the nafs but isn't it such a great benefit to us that we have so many reformers to guide us? The nafs and Shaitaan can do nothing to us, unlike

those who have reneged from the authority of the Aimmah Mujtahideen and are now under the authority of Shaitaan.

All those under whose authority we flourish are our well-wishers whilst the creature in whose authority they have moved to is a clear-cut enemy (aduwwum mubeen).

No one should feel snug at making his own Islaah (self-reformation). Look at a man with such insight as Hazrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu)! He said to the person who warned him: "If you deviate we will set you straight with this sword,"

"Alhamdulillah, I am among such people where there are my protectors."

This is also the benefit in customary *bai't*; both parties start thinking about each other. Both anticipate help from each other. A village-dweller became *bai't* to me. I asked him: "What need do you see for *bai't*? Namaaz and Roza (Salaat and Saum) can be carried out without this?"

He replied: "I have taken *bai't* for this reason that I do become lazy at offering Namaaz and Roza. By taking *bai't* I will become more observant."

What a worthwhile thing he said.

(Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi Rahmatullahi alaihi, *Adabul I'laam*)

THE FUQAHA, FIQAH AND TASAWWUF

Imam Abu Haneefah's insight is remarkable. Consider the view of Imam Abu Haneefah that it is not permissible for a waaiz (public-speaker) or anyone else to break musical instruments otherwise compensation will be liable. This is the prerogative of the ruler. He can investigate and break these instruments. He can mete out appropriate punishment for the use of such haraam items.

Consider how much peace there is in this ruling. Such forceful action taken by any one besides the ruler does not stop the actions of the guilty party; it only serves to inflame the situation and cause strife. The resultant friction and anarchy have wide-reaching consequences. Similarly, enacting penal punishments is the exclusive right of the Sultaan.

Fiqah is a difficult subject. The Faqeeh should be an all-rounder. He should be a mufassir, muhaddith, faqeeh and mutakallim. (In other words, he should be a specialist in the fields of Tafseer, Hadeeth, Fiqah and Ilmul Kalaam which is the science of Islamic Scholasticism.) He should have an understanding of politics. In fact, there is a need for being aware of Tibb here and there. Even awareness of physiology is required for certain issues.

Fiqah is not an easy subject, yet in some quarters the gratitude shown to the Fuqaha is by reviling them. These revilers are extreme anarchists. They wilfully cause anarchy and fuel fires of trouble.

The ghair muqallids (those who make taqleed of their nafs instead of Taqleed of the Aimmah Mujtahideen) frequently call themselves ‘Ahlul Hadeeth’ whereas they have no clue what is Hadeeth. They only confine themselves to words. What is to be understood by the Hadeeth, alluded to in the narration: ***“Whoever Allah wishes well for (khair), He makes that person a Faqeeh of the Deen,”*** that is something else. If it was only a matter of understanding words, the kuffaar of Makkah understood the words and thus they would have been Faqeeh and among the Ahlul Khair.

Being a Faqeeh in Deen is to have acumen in the Deen together with the understanding of words of the Qur’aan and Hadeeth. Such persons are found in abundance among the Hanafiyyah.

Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah Saheb was a Shaikh of Tasawwuf. He wasn’t a complete textual Aalim, but listen to his philosophy of the truth. A person from Bhopal came for Haj. He became *bai’t* to Haji Saheb. This person was accompanied by another person also from Bhopal who was an extreme ghair muqallid and who took his companion also to be a ghair muqallid. By his companion being accepted into *bai’t* the ghair muqallid assumed that there were no restrictions on ghair muqallideen being taking into *bai’t* by Haji Saheb and he therefore requested via his companion for bai’t stipulating however that he will remain ghair muqallid.

Hazrat accepted the condition. He then came personally and asked. Hazrat replied that there was no problem and he was accepted into *bai’t*. Allah Ta’ala alone knows what effect this *bai’t* had upon him that the first Namaaz thereafter he did not say *Aameen* aloud and nor did he make *Rafa’ Yadain* (raise his hands

before and after Ruku’). Hazrat came to know of this. Hazrat was startled. Hazrat called him and said: “If your findings have changed then, fine. But if it is for my sake that you did so then I do not wish to bear the consequences of you forsaking the Sunnah.” Just consider this philosophy of the truth.

[The ghair muqallid believed *Aameen bil jahr and Rafa’ Yadain* to be Sunnat. It was, therefore, not permissible for him to forsake something which he believed to be Sunnah for the sake of being *bai’t* to a Shaikh.]

Our august elders and in particular Hazrat Haji Saheb were obsessed with the Sunnah. Isn’t it then absolute zulm (injustice) to brand such personages of being *muta’assib* (bigoted)? Yes, they were *mutasallib* (rigid), not *muta’assib*. *Tasallub* is one thing and *ta’assub* is something else. *Mutasallib Fid Deen* is he who is rigid in the Deen whilst a *mut’assib* is he who clings to wrong intransigently.

Imam Shaafi’ (Rahmatullahi alaih) says: “I desired Jannat when I learnt that it is the meeting place of friends.” This was a Faqeeh and a Soofi. Now people have distorted the meaning of Fiqah and Tasawwuf. They have declared the two to be opposites, whereas there is nothing contradictory between the two. Tasawwuf means: to build oneself externally and internally; externally with A’maal and internally with Akhlaaq.

Imam Abu Haneefah (Rahmatullahi alaih) has defined Fiqah as: ***“Understanding what is beneficial for one and what is harmful.”*** This definition is wide-ranging and covers external acts and internal traits. Thus, how can Tasawwuf and Fiqah be opposites?

Muslims of former times were endowed equally with Fiqah and Tasawwuf. This curse has spread only in these times where both are considered to be separate and the two have been corrupted, whereas both are harmonious.

Shah Waliyyullah (Rahmatullahi alaih) writes that one should keep the company of a person who is a muhaddith, a faqeeh and also a soofi. Equilibrium is in this. He stated this in *Qaulul Jameel*. The family of Shah Abdul Azeez Saheb, Masha-Allah, were paragons of this comprehensiveness. Among them was Shah Isma'eel Shaheed Saheb.

Some people think Shah Isma'eel Saheb was a ghair muqallid. This is absolutely false. An Ustaad of mine used to say that he met a person who was in the army of Hazrat Sayyid Saheb and asked him whether Moulana Isma'eel Saheb was a ghair muqallid. He replied: "I don't know, but what I can tell you is that in the army of Sayyid Saheb it was common word that ghair muqallids are Little Raafzis (Shiahs)." From this you can judge whether there was any ghair muqallid in that army.

Once, someone asked Moulana Shaheed Saheb a mas-alah. Moulana replied that according to Imam Abu Haneefah the ruling was this… The person posing the question said: "Tell me what is your view?" Moulana responded: "What can I say in front of Imam Saheb?"

(Extracts from *Adabul I'laam* and *Adabul I'tidaal* of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi Quddisa Sirruhu)

ETIQUETTES OF A MUSLIM'S SOCIAL LIFE

"Do not exceed the limits in Deen unlawfully and do not follow the vain desires of people who have gone astray before, led many astray and have departed from the Straight Path." (Surah Maaidah, 77)

A Muslim owes another Muslim several rights; making Salaam, answering his call – be it an invitation for meals or a call for help, when he sneezes and says, "Alhamdulillah" then to respond with, "Yarhamukallah", to visit him when he is sick, and to attend his Janaazah Salaat when he passes away. These are rights owed to another Muslim in his presence.

Then there are other rights germane to his absence, for instance to respond to backbiting aimed at him, to reject slander against him, etc. Some obligatory etiquettes pertaining to these rights shall be addressed today.

Perimeters of Islam

It should be understood that Akhlaaq and Mu'aasharat (the moral and social code of Islam) also have prescribed limits and rules, just as the laws pertaining to Namaaz and Roza (Salaat and Saum) have. As a consequence of excesses and deficiencies in these limits and rules a person ends up abusing the rights of others. Just as a four-rakaat Namaaz is not discharged if five or three rakaats are read, Asr Salaat is not discharged during the time of Zuhr, Qiraat is not permissible in Rukoo' – in fact it is sinful – fasting till Asr is not Roza and it is a sin to fast till Isha,

similarly the laws pertaining to Akhlaaq and Mu'aasharat also have their limits. Immoderation and imperfection in these limits result in the perpetration of wrong. Hence it is obligatory to be aware of their etiquettes and limits.

The way of socializing adopted nowadays clearly reveals that most people are unaware of the laws pertaining to social behaviour, as if they do not even regard it to be part of Deen and hence whatever comes in their mind they carry out. Hence they do not ascertain the laws of these.

Some who know somewhat consider deficiency and imperfection in the moral and social code of conduct to be bad, but they do not consider immoderation to be bad. For them excesses and over-indulgence are unquestionably desired and cherished, whereas earlier it was learnt from the Aayat of the Qur'aan that exceeding the limits is reproachable. Just as deficiency is bad, similarly, excess is also bad.

Transgressing the Limits

Consider Salaam. Look at the excesses people commit here. They make Salaam whilst another is engaged in Zikr, engaged in Tilaawat of the Qur'aan, during the Khutbah and during Azaan. These types of excesses are also not favourable in the Deen. The prohibition of these is in the Aayat:

"Do not commit excesses in your Deen".
(Surah Nisaa, 171)

The similitude of this is like a medicinal prescription. If a physician prescribes a certain quantity of a medication, now if a person thinks that since the physician has prescribed this

medication there should certainly be benefit in it and the more of it is taken the greater will the benefit be, and thus he increases the dosage, it will never be beneficial because the benefit is conditional to a prescribed amount. Similarly, by virtue of the Shariah being spiritual treatment its injunctions should be viewed similar to the dosages prescribed in medicines. Therefore, observing less or more will invariably produce harm.

Allah Ta'ala states:

"These are the limits by Allah. Therefore do not go beyond them." (Surah Baqarah, 229)

A Subtle Reminder Not To Be Complacent

People are lax in regard to rights and etiquettes and care not in this regard. In fact, some rights, notwithstanding that these are of a lessor category than the major rights, have been accorded special attention in the Qur'aan. Obligatory rights are discharged in view of people understanding them to be obligatory. However, the rights which people consider to be non-obligatory, they will surely be complacent in regard to these rights. This is subtly alluded to in the Aayat which places *wasiyyat* (bequest at the time of death) before *dain* (debt). Allah Ta'ala says:

"…after wasiyyat bequeathed or debt." (Surah Nisaa, 12)

This is despite the fact that after fulfilling the burial rights discharging the mayyit's debt is of prior importance, thereafter his bequest. But Allah Ta'ala mentioned *wasiyyat* first because there is greater complacency in regard to *wasiyyat*. All acknowledge the incumbency of discharging the mayyit's debt. Moreover there are creditors to demand the right. On the other

hand, *wasiyyat* per se is a voluntary act. So *wasiyyat* was placed before debt to make known the importance of ensuring the discharge of the deceased's bequest.

Making Salaam

Be that as it may, we shall now mention etiquettes pertaining to those rights. The first is Salaam which is *Sunnat alal kifaayah,* however, the negligence carried out in this is that people do not see whether it is time to make Salaam or not. Sometimes it is prohibited to make Salaam, like at the time of Ibaadat, whether the other person is engaged in Zikr or Qur'aan or Namaaz. Salaam on these occasions is forbidden because it is drawing the occupied person from attention to Allah to oneself. The similitude of this is like a person is busy talking with the governor and another tries to draw his attention away from the governor. Will this not be lack of decorum?

One Buzrug says that a person who tries to divert the attention of one engrossed in the remembrance of Allah is struck immediately with the anger of Allah. Yes, if any urgent matter has come up then this is entirely a different matter. For example, if a person is in danger of injuring himself then it is necessary to break one's Salaat to rescue the person.

Also, remember that just as it is forbidden to make Salaam to a person occupied in the Zikr of Allah, similarly it is prohibited to do anything which distracts him from his Zikr, such as coughing or clearing one's throat to draw his attention.

Similarly, some people waiting for another who is engaged in Zikr stare at him. This also unsettles a person. If you wait for

someone then wait at a place where the occupied person does not see you, so that his heart does not become uneasy.

Customary Etiquette

Some forms of customary etiquette are troublesome. Such etiquette should be forsaken. Look at the illustrious Sahaabah! They would not stand for Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) as they knew that it was disliked and heavy on Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). Respect is to court the pleasure of one's Buzrug to the extent that if one learns explicitly or by indication that one's Shaikh is not happy at anyone walking along with him then one should not give him this trouble. If he feels uncomfortable by anyone holding his shoes then don't even handle his shoes.

Moulana Fatah Muhammad Saheb (marhoom wa maghfoor) was one day coming out of the Jaami' Masjid after Jumah Salaat. A person came and wanted to carry Moulana's shoes. Out of humility Moulana was disinclined to give his shoes. This person was adamant. Moulana held on tightly to his shoes. This ignoramus grabbed hold of Moulana's hands with one hand and forcefully snatched the shoes away with his other hand. Just consider how much pain and trouble this person caused Moulana just for the sake of carrying out some customary etiquette. He transgressed the limits of adab and acted rudely. This is the product of ignorance. And these things are not to be treated lightly.

ETIQUETTES OF A MUSLIM'S SOCIAL LIFE (PART TWO)

Although acts pertaining to the social code are not like Namaaz and Roza which are Sha'aair (salient features) of Islam, but considering that Akhlaaq is associated with others and in this way it is part of rights owed to others, therefore greater fear of being apprehended bodes for corruption, excesses and deficiencies in Akhlaaq than for Namaaz and Roza.

Ibaadaat are of the Rights of Allah. If there happens to be deficiency in Ibaadaat, then considering that Allah Ta'ala is Kareem (Munificent) His pardon is not remote. Rights of mankind, however, are due to those who are entitled to the rights. Only by asking for maaf (forgiveness) or being pardoned by the affected person will the right be waived. Care for these rights is therefore exceptionally important.

The Exemplary Social Conduct of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi Wa Sallam)

The Hadeeth Shareef mentions the incident of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) going to the Qabristaan at night and Hazrat Aishah (Radhiyallahu anha) following him. The episode is ample proof for the importance of social conduct. The incident happened thus:

One night whilst being at the home of Hazrat Aishah (Radhiyallahu anha), Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) went to the Qabristaan (Muslim cemetery). Hazrat Aishah thought that he was going to see some other wife. Nabi

(Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) again was under the impression that she was sleeping. Knowledge of everything is the exclusive attribute of Allah Ta'ala.

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) got up quietly so that Hazrat Aishah does not wake up as he thought her to be sleeping. He quietly opened the door and quietly closed the door behind him. One should not disturb sleeping persons. Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) then went to the Qabristaan.

Hazrat Aishah was awake and she thought that he was going to another of his wives. Since she had excessive love for Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and was faithfully attached to him she could not bear seeing him go and quietly and cautiously she followed him.

The Love of Even Animals for Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam)

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) commanded such love and affection that leave alone Hazrat Aishah and other humans, even animals were restless with love for him. When Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) slaughtered a hundred camels during Haj of which sixty-three were with his own hands, which demonstrates his physical power, the camels were vying with each other to be first to be slaughtered by putting their necks out. Out of love for him each camel tried to be ahead. The words of the Hadeeth say: *"Each one was trying to get in front of the other."*

When animals were restless with love for him, Hazrat Aishah had passionate love for him and extreme closeness to him. So

what surprise is there in her restlessness? So she followed him till the Qabristaan. There Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) made Du'aa for the deceased persons and then returned home. Seeing a person in front of him Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) walked fast to catch up. Hazrat Aishah started to run. Rasoolullah also started running to catch up. Hazrat Aishah ran faster and made it into her home. She jumped into bed out of breath.

When Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) entered he saw her out of breath and asked her why was she breathing so heavy. The Hadeeth continues.

The Golden Rule of Akhlaaq

Thus, the golden rule of Akhlaaq is not to hurt and trouble anyone. Some people come to a person's home and make a huge clamour. This is also troubling. The Qur'aan says:

"Those who noisily call you from behind walls generally lack intelligence." (Surah Hujuraat, 4)

We were speaking about the Aadaab of Salaam. We mentioned that Salaam should not be made to a person who is engaged in Taa'at and Zikr. Also, when a person is eating, Salaam should not be made. By being forced to reply he may choke on his food.

Etiquettes of Musaafahah

Then the compliment to Salaam is Musaafahah (shaking hands). Several important etiquettes in this regard as well shall be mentioned.

Musaafahah at the time of meeting is unanimously *Masnoon*. At the time of departing to make Musaafahah is disputed. Some Ulama say it is *Masnoon* whilst others disagree. Besides these two occasions no third occasion is proven. There are, therefore, limits and rules applicable to Musaafahah as well. And rules and limits are not confined to this; everything has its particular limits and rules in the absence of which the act will not be proper.

Take for example Salaat. If a person renders five-rakaats instead of four-rakaats it will not be valid. Jum'ah according to the Hanafiyyah is not valid in villages. If a person performs Haj in Bombay it is not done. In this manner every act has rules and regulations governing it. Thus there are rules governing Musaafahah and Mu'aanaqah.

Thus the musaafahah and mu'aanaqah people carry out customarily on the days of Eid and Jum'ah are unsubstantiated anywhere. The days of Jum'ah and Eid have nothing to do with these acts. These acts are therefore of customary bid'at. They should be abandoned.

Some times Musaafahah inconveniences the other person. Take for instance the scenario of a person carrying his shoes in one hand and an umbrella in the other. Now how should he make Musaafahah? The only way is for him to put his shoes down and free his hands. Just to give him this trouble is also irrational.

Similarly, if a person is occupied one should not make Musaafahah. He is inconvenienced and his work is hampered. Also, if a person is walking briskly along, it is not appropriate to stop him to make Musaafahah. The work he has set out for is impeded and he will feel upset.

Some people have the habit when attending a gathering to start making Musaafahah with all and sundry. If they are busy then their work comes to a standstill and this bothers them. Similarly, many people have the habit of making Musaafahah to the speaker after his bayaan. Firstly, this is bid'at. Secondly, it puts strain on the poor speaker. Whatever causes strain to another should be discarded.

ETIQUETTES OF A MUSLIM'S SOCIAL LIFE (PART THREE)

Ijaabatut Daa'i

Amongst the rights taught in Islam is to answer a call (ijaabatut daa'i). This has two meanings; one is when a brother Muslim calls then to answer him. There are reciprocal etiquettes pertaining to this as well. Accordingly, Imam Abu Haneefah (Rahmatullahi alaih) gave Imam Abu Yusuf (Rahmatullahi alaih) the parting advice of not responding to a person who calls from behind because he has demeaned you. He has called you like how animals and cattle are called. ***"Like a person (herding animals) calling with incomprehensible sounds." (Surah Baqarah, 171)***

Not responding to such a person is not haughtiness; it is correcting that person, for calling someone from behind is really uncultured. The one calling has some work with the person in front, so he should approach from in front.

Accepting an Invitation to Meals

Another meaning to answering a call is to accept an invitation of having meals. This is also regulated with etiquette. Some people do not accept the da'wat of a poor person out of haughtiness. This *takabbur* is utterly reprehensible. If poor people invite a rich person then his wealth and fame should not be cause for him to refuse the invitation.

One should accept an invitation to meals without delving into the sincerity or lack of it from the inviter. There is no need for making investigations. Nevertheless, it is not permissible to accept the invitation of people whose income is felt to be predominantly haraam. Yes, if the income is mostly halaal then the acceptance of the invitation is permissible, although it will still be better to turn down the invitation as a caution to the person to discard haraam ways of income.

If the invitation is to a sinful gathering, then too, one should not accept. If the sin, such as music and singing as in vogue in most wedding gatherings, is commenced after one reaches the place, or one finds out that there is sin being committed at the venue of the invitation only after one arrives, then see if the sin is being perpetrated at the spot or place where one is sitting, or somewhere else. If it is where one is sitting then get up and leave. And if it is elsewhere then if one is looked up to in Deen, then too, one should leave. And if one is an ordinary lay person then one may eat and leave thereafter.

Similarly, the many customs in vogue at weddings render the gatherings sinful. One should not attend such gatherings.

Invitations on occasions of joy or sadness, but conducted for name and fame should also be refused.

A da'wat which is in compensation for teaching Deen and in return for Ibaadat is also not permissible and not proper. This refers to da'wats given for people to come and recite Qur'aan Shareef, Kalimah, Durood, etc. and they are remunerated with assorted foods. The da'wat for a bayaan also falls in this class. Anyone who has the slightest honour and respect for the Deen will abstain from such da'wats. Yes, if the waa'iz is on journey and accepts an invitation on account of being on journey then this is something else.

Similarly, one should not accept the da'wat of *zillat* (dishonour/disgrace). To abstain from *zillat* is a commendable injunction of the Shariah. The Hadeeth Shareef states: ***"It does not behove the Mu-min to disgrace himself."***

Allaamah Shaami has written that the Ulama should stay away from invitations which bring disgrace to them. The reason for this is that by the Ulama being disgraced, Ilm of Deen is brought into disrepute.

The da'wat which is really worthy of accepting is a da'wat which is extended purely out of love and affection, and in which halaal food is served. Neither is it out of some custom, nor out of ostentation, nor out of pride and nor dishonourable. It is spawned by muhabbat (affection) and muhabbat only. This should also be the case with hadyah (a gift). Thus, this type of da'wat and hadyah are *Masnoon*. Accepting these are *Sunnat* as the motive is only mutual friendship and love. ***"Exchange gifts and nurture your love in this way."*** This is a Hadeeth.

In so far as the gifts which are given out of custom are concerned, such as the gifts given at weddings, these are devoid of love and affection. Yes, something given purely out of friendship and without any condition or constraint, such a gift is permissible. In fact, utilizing such a hadyah produces Noor in the heart.

Visiting the Sick

Among the rights which a Muslim owes to a brother Muslim is visiting him when he is sick. Here, too, there are deficiencies and excesses. Some people don't even visit a sick brother. This is a terrible neglect. Some again visit the sick, but instead of their visit bringing comfort to the sick person, they cause further takleef (discomfort/pain) to the sick person. For instance, to overstay one's visit is takleef. The sick person has many needs and desires. By putting up with the visitor who stretches his stay the sick person is inconvenienced and put into difficulty. In the Hadeeth Shareef it appears: ***"Whoever visits a sick person let his stay be short."***

Nursing the sick person is something else. Here a person stays with the sick person and attends to his needs. Serving and nursing others are not obligatory upon everyone. Not causing harm and pain are binding upon everyone, however.

Some people have the habit of sitting by a sick person and blabbering away, or forcing the sick person to relate his whole story. This is also distressing to the sick person and should be avoided. *"Jannat is a place where no one causes difficulty, discomfort and pain to another."*

Condoling and Attending a Janaazah

Another of the rights owed to a fellow Muslim is condoling with the bereaved family and attending the Janaazah Salaat of the deceased. There are etiquettes to guide these practices as well. Some are: carrying the bier (not passing and pushing it along as has become the bid'ah custom of today), following and putting the Janaazah into the qabr and reciting some Qur'aan for the mayyit's benefit. This Isaal-e-Thawaab should be done in full conformity with the Shariah; otherwise it is bereft of use.

Conclusion

The summary of this entire bayaan is that in our social life we should endeavour to give comfort and benefit to the dead and the living. We should neither harm nor cause difficulty to anyone. Correct inculcation of these etiquettes can be attained by keeping the company of the Ahlullah. In short, all the time and in all situations be careful not to inconvenience, disturb and hurt anyone.

(Modified from *Huqooqul Mu'aasharat* of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi Rahmatullahi Alaih)

ESTABLISHING SALAAT

"Establish Salaat and do not be like the mushrikeen."

(Surah Room, 31)

This is a portion of an Aayat. In this Aayat Allah *Jalla Shaanuhu Wa Amma Nawaaluhu* (Sublime is His greatness and all-encompassing is His bounty) instructs something and prohibits something else. I shall speak on what has been instructed and what has been prohibited. Both, the instruction and the prohibition are connected. From this something major is educed which will serve as a course of action and bearing it in mind will be extremely beneficial for all A'maal (deeds and actions). This is the gist of what I am going to speak on today.

Allah Ta'ala says:

"Establish Salaat and do not be like the mushrikeen."

'Establish' means to correctly and perfectly discharge with punctuality. It is also interpreted as: observe the rights and conditions of Namaaz fully. Obviously something is only 'correct' when all its parts are in order and in proper proportion. If this is not the case then it cannot be called 'correct'.

For example, when cooking food, the food will only be judged to be excellent when all the ingredients have been added and in correct proportion. Thus, if too much salt is added the dish will not be said to be excellent.

In like manner, fulfilment of the injunction of 'establishing' or correctly discharging Salaat can only be when all rights and regulations pertaining to Salaat are fulfilled. Then it will be said that the Salaat was correctly discharged. In Arabic, to correctly discharge, is expressed as *Iqaamat*. If this is not the case; its parts or postures are not correctly fulfilled or the proper proportion of the postures are not observed then it can never be said that such

a person has correctly discharged his Salaat. In fact, it will be said that he has despoiled and corrupted his Salaat.

Aqeemus Salaah thus means: Offer Salaah and in this manner that all its rights and regulations are fulfilled. The Salaat should not be Salaat only in name. It is not difficult to understand the following: Your superior or your friend tells you to provide him with a worker. You fulfil this instruction of his by presenting to him a blind, cripple and lame person who only breathes but is incapable of doing any work. He asks: "What is this?" and you respond by saying: "I have fulfilled your instruction; I have brought a person." What will the response of the superior be, and will your friend be happy with this 'service' of yours?

If he asks: "What kind of person have you brought?" will it be rational to say that this is a human being and therefore a qualified 'person'? "He is of the progeny of the human race and therefore a 'person'. Furthermore he has life. Who can say that he is not a person? I have complied with your wishes." Your superior or friend will respond: "You can call him 'person', but we have not asked for a person only in name; we have asked for a person who can work. We wish to take work from him. This person himself is in need of being served and taken care of."

Is the friend's response correct or the dry response of the instruction having been met by the presentation of a 'person'? Obviously the friend's objection is correct. It is thus confirmed that there are two stages in fulfilling an instruction; one is the letter and the other the spirit. Merely the letter is not desired by anyone. Everyone desires the spirit of the instruction to be fulfilled.

Consider the example of purchasing almonds from a traditional oriental bazaar where the almond comes with its shell. The seller gives you almonds which are only in name, that is, containing no kernel. Will you return the purchase or not? If he argues: “You wanted almonds; I have given you almonds,” you will respond by saying: “The purpose is benefit and use which are from the kernel, not from just a shell.”

Friends, we should be ashamed of ourselves. In our personal dealings we desire the stage of benefit and use, whilst in dealings with Allah we suffice with the stage of name and technicalities. We then soothe our conscience by saying that we have discharged the order of Allah Ta’ala and we sit in anticipation of thawaab and recompense.

Our Salaat is read without concern for perfection of our Tahaarat and without care for the clothes we wear. Neither is our Rukoo’ correct, nor our Sajdah and nor do we separate the two Sajdahs significantly. Some people do not raise their heads from the first Sajdah enough for the separation of the two Sajdahs to be confirmed. It is recorded in the kitaabs that such a ‘sajdah’ is, in effect, one Sajdah. In this scenario, only one Sajdah was carried out. Then how can the Namaaz be done?

After making one Sajdah a person should sit up straight and all the limbs should come to rest. Then the second Sajdah should be made.

Another innovation is that many people do not have Qaumah in their Salaat. Qaumah means to stand up straight after Rukoo’. This is waajib. Without this the Namaaz is not done. Everyone knows about Qaumah, though some may be ignorant of its

compulsory status. Nevertheless, everyone knows that after Rukoo' one should say, *"Sami-'Allahu liman hamidah"* and *"Rabbana Lakal Hamd".* Now when do those who have excised Rukoo' from their Salaat say these Azkaar? Do they say these in Rukoo'? But their Rukoo' is also observed to be short. What else can be concluded from their actions other than stating that they have excised one part of Salaat? This is transmogrification of the Salaat which has been decreed and described by Allah!

Since you do offer Salaat then why throw your Salaat away to the winds? If you cannot achieve the highest stage of Salaat then at least make sure that the minimum requirements are met. At least the mandatory postures should be performed by virtue of which it can be said that Salaat was offered. Let the external form of Salaat be there, though the true nature of it may be missing. But, as mentioned, we have despoiled even the external form of Salaat, leave alone the spirit and essence of it. Now the example which I have given of purchasing almonds at an oriental bazaar is not even applicable. The seller gives empty shells. The shells are devoid of the kernel. Or one is told, "Bring someone," and a handicapped person is brought.

Now these examples do not even illustrate adequately our Salaat. The example of such a Salaat now is of a person asking for almonds and the seller giving him charcoal, or somebody is asked for but a dead man from the mortuary is presented. Do we think that with such a 'salaat' we can avoid divine apprehension?

Establishing Salaat (Part Two)

We should pay heed to the fact that when we ask for something and we are given just a token then we become angry, and when Allah Ta'ala asks then we do not even give something of token value, whereas the right here is to present that offering which is of worth, in fact which is of the highest order. If this is not the case, then we will take a step back and say that at least it should be according to what we would like for ourselves. A worthwhile offering is that in which the essence is found.

And what is the essence of Salaat? It is mentioned in this Aayat:

"Correctly discharge your Salaat for My remembrance."
(Surah Taha, 16)

The thought of Allah should be in the heart and mind. To remember Him is the essence of Salaat. We are far, extremely far from this. A worthwhile Salaat is that in which Allah Ta'ala is thought about. If this cannot be achieved then let the Salaat be Salaat in name, for it is not remote of the Rahmat of Allah to accept it. But if the obligatory postures are even missing then it cannot even be called Salaat.

If our Namaaz was an imitation then, too, it would have been appreciated. But we have destroyed our Namaaz. Neither is there any essence to our Namaaz nor any correct form to it. We read Salaat but our Salaat is of no value. Not reading is an even darker issue. On account of this state of affairs the Command is given: *"Aqeemus Salaah!"* In other words, "Correct your Salaah".

Allah Ta'ala did not command reading only. In fact, He has commanded that the Salaat be offered correctly.

What does "correctly offering" mean? "To correctly offer" means to offer the Salaat with all its rights and regulations. Among these rights is to be regular with Salaat. I have broached this topic for this reason that in the rural areas Salaat is not offered regularly. Firstly, many people do not offer their Salaat, and if they do then it is ugly. If there happens to be people who are regular with their Salaat then they make do with performing the Salaat in its time; they are not regular with Jamaat Salaat, whereas all these are necessary.

And if we find someone punctual and observant then these are restricted to the person in question. He does not emphasise to his family at home the rights of Salaat. Friends, be punctual yourselves and make your womenfolk and children punctual. You will have to answer for their actions. Make everyone regular and observant of Namaaz. Ensure that no one's Salaat is ugly.

In our town there was a Moulana Shaikh Muhammad Saheb. Once, it was the moon issue. Some people from the rural area came to testify to their sighting of the moon. Moulana asked one villager if he performs his Salaat. The villager replied: "On one occasion the Moulanas raised a hue and cry about Namaaz. The village folk came together and decided to boycott the Janaazah of one who did not offer his Namaaz. Then I read."

My address at this moment of time is to those who believe in Salaat and regard Salaat to be good. Such people should offer their Salaat as required, that is, firstly they should be regular with their Salaat and secondly they should be observant of its times.

Some people offer their Asr Salaat after having attended to all their other work. The sun is setting and this person is engaged in Salaat. The reason behind this is sometimes laziness and negligence, and sometimes the reason is that these people think that after a short while Maghrib Salaat has to be performed, so why break work twice? "We will complete all our work and take care of both Salaats together."

Friends, it is an obvious fact that whether you offer your Salaats simultaneously or separately, the time taken to offer the two Salaats remain the same. For instance, if it takes five minutes to offer one Salaat then for two Salaats it will take ten minutes. Now even if you offer the Salaats apart from each other the time duration will still remain ten minutes. Thus, if you take a break from your work and offer one Salaat, the Salaat will be offered in its correct time and the same five minutes will be spent in discharging the Salaat.

Another right of the Salaat is for the Rukoo' and Sajdah to be perfect. Also, whatever Tasbeeh and Azkaar are due in Salaat check these by someone to ascertain whether you are reciting them correctly. Also ensure that your recitation of the Qur'aan Shareef is correct. If you cannot get the pronunciation of certain letters right then at least iron out your zabar, zer (fat-hah, kasrah) mistakes.

Offer your Salaat and ensure that the wife and children also offer their Salaats. Allah Ta'ala has appointed you as governor over them. Just as you educate them in matters of this world, educate them in Deen as well. If not, you are going to be answerable.

Enforce Salaat upon those you have power over if they do not offer their Salaat. Mete out appropriate punishment. Fines are not permissible as punishment in the view of the Hanafiyyah. Punish them in some other way.

Namaaz is not an issue with one's clan or neighbours. It is an issue with Allah Ta'ala. Its discharge is necessary. One who misses his Salaat should impose upon himself some punishment. For example, when he misses a Namaaz he should forgo a meal. Doing this once or a few times will set the mind straight. The nafs will then become subordinate. I, furthermore, assure you that by forgoing one meal or a few meals you won't die. It is confirmed by Tibb-practice that not eating a few meals does not kill a person.

In short, take up courage and carry out what you have to do. Without courage, not even a morsel of food will go into the mouth. This was the bayaan of *Aqeemus Salaah*. Unintentionally the bayaan has become somewhat lengthy. Nevertheless, it should be of benefit, Insha-Allah. (From *Adabul Islam* of Hazrat Moulana Thanwi Rahmatullahi Alaih)

WASAAWIS

The Reality and Mystery of Waswasah

A stray thought crossing the mind is not nugatory of veneration for the Ahkaam (Commandments of the Shariah). In fact, that is a sign of perfection in Imaan and hence the Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum) experienced such waswasah. When they submitted this problem to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa

sallam) saying: *"Yaa Rasoolallah, we are experiencing such stray thoughts that it is better for us to burn to ashes than express these waswasah,"* Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) queried and stated: *"Do you really experience such thoughts? That is clear sign of your Imaan."*

He furthermore said: *"Alhamdulillah, Allah Ta'ala has diverted the plot of Shaitaan to waswasah."* His reach fell short of your Aqaaid and A'maal (Beliefs and Practices).

The Ahl-e-Sulook (those who desire the closeness and love of Allah) also experience such wasaawis (plural of waswasah), that committing suicide appears easier to them than going through such thoughts. Those who are ignorant among them even carry out suicide. But the informed Saalikeen exercise Sabr (patience and fortitude).

The mystery and rationale behind these waswasah is that when a Saalik sets out on the path to Allah then Shaitaan becomes extremely vexed. Shaitaan then desires to harm this Saalik. He firstly embarks on a campaign of stopping the Saalik from Namaaz, Roza, Faraaiz and Waajibaat. In this way he schemes to harm the Deen of the Saalik. When he realizes that he has failed in this nefarious plot he plans another strategy. He then satisfies himself with inflicting physical harm and worries. Towards this end he whispers evil and obscene thoughts into the heart of the Saalik.

The Saalik becomes horrified at these stray thoughts and he grieves thinking that his Imaan is deficient. He cannot understand why these thoughts are plaguing him, whereas these

thoughts are not at all harmful to his Imaan, yes they are unsettling.

Being unsettled by these thoughts also has an underlying reason to it; a misunderstanding. The Saalik thinks that these wasaawis are produced by his heart; that they stem from his heart, whereas this is wrong. These are the production of Shaitaan. Shaitaan blows these evil thoughts into the heart and mind. The heart is merely the locus and thoroughfare of these stray thoughts.

After understanding and remembering this mystery, Insha-Allah one will find no reason to become unsettled at all. In fact, waswasah will be uprooted because Shaitaan flings waswasah at a person to trouble a person. When this person doesn't become troubled and unsettled then Shaitaan will give up his waswasah-strike.

Practical Remedy for Waswasah

So the practical thing to do when troubled by waswasah is to recite *"A'uthubillahi minash Shaitaanir Rajeem",* for it is proven that these wasaawis are by the meddling of Shaitaan, and with *Ta'awwuth* (reciting, *A'uthu...*), in fact with any Zikr, Shaitaan is repulsed.

Furthermore, when one engrosses oneself in Zikr, and complete engrossment in two things at the same time is not possible, then one will not be disturbed by the waswasah. Assuming for a moment that waswasah does not cease even in this case and one is overwhelmed then this is also a type of Mujaahadah (spiritual discipline). There is pure benefit then too. One should, therefore, not become grieved.

A person who concerns himself with repelling waswasah and gaining pleasure from his Ibaadat and Zikr – which is the case with most Saalikeen today – such a person makes Ibaadat and Zikr for personal pleasure. Such a person is not offering his Ibaadat and Zikr for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala.

The second remedy for waswasah is Zikr in general, as mentioned above. When under a waswasah-attack, engage in Zikr. The Hadeeth says: *"When he (the Mu-min) engages in Zikr then Shaitaan retreats. And when he (the Mu-min) becomes forgetful (of the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala) then Shaitaan throws waswasah."*

A Test by Allah Ta'ala

Another hikmat (underlying reason) of waswasah is that it is a test by Allah Ta'ala of the Saalik. The test is to see whether the Saalik's Ibaadat was for carnal pleasure or steadfastness even under the duress of waswasah; where does his gaze go to when afflicted by waswasah? Therefore, do not become troubled at all with these wasaawis, and continue with your work.

These wasaawis are not nugatory of one's closeness to Allah Ta'ala. Such a person is close unto Allah.

As a matter of fact, these wasaawis are not even in the heart, although they may appear to be so. In actual fact, they are out of the heart. It is like a fly sitting on a mirror. The onlooker may perceive the fly to be in the mirror, whereas it is outside the mirror. Similarly, the waswasah is outside the heart. Where there is Zikrullah in the heart there is no scope for waswasah there.

Such a Mu-min's heart is practically sealed and protected from waswasah.

Similarly, waswasah does not pass through the heart of a Zaakir (one who observes Zikr dutifully). Whatever feeling he gets of waswasah is the reflection of waswasah.

Another Strategy

One Buzrug says that as treatment of this malady one should become very happy because this is a sign of Imaan, for Nabi (Alaihis Salaam) said: *"That is a clear sign of Imaan."*

A thief breaks into a home when there is some wealth there and hence waswasah is experienced by Saaliheen (pious people). Those who are caught in fisq and fujoor (transgression and shameless acts) are not bothered by waswasah.

The rationale behind becoming happy at the waswasah is that it severs the waswasah. Shaitaan's desire by striking a person with waswasah is to make the person sad and dejected. So, if instead of that he (the one who experiences waswasah) becomes happy then Shaitaan will give up.

Subhaanallah! What a remedy! You can understand from this the level of perfection in the Ilm of the illustrious Fuqaha and Soofiyah.

(From *Al-Ikhlaas Part One* of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi Rahmatullahi Alaih)

THE CALL OF THE QUR'AAN

Before the wa'z Qari Muhammad Yameen Saheb and some children recited the Qur'aan Shareef. Thereafter Hazrat Moulana Thanwi said the following words in respect of the Kalaamullah – the Divine Speech – the Qur'aan Majeed:

Friends! The *Kalaamullah* was recited so that you take interest in it. In these times people are becoming disinclined in this direction and consider it futile. Some even say that it is a waste of one's life; if the energies of kids are channelled into other directions then how nice it will be!!!

In some places there are committees established to suspend the teaching of the Qur'aan. They consider engaging in the learning and teaching of the Qur'aan to be a waste of time [Na'oothubillah]! They even say that to learn it without understanding is to waste time. "Learning it in parrot fashion serves no benefit; time is lost and no benefit is accrued," according to them.

Our response is that Allah and His Rasool (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) have declared it to be beneficial. They have promised reward over it, although it is not on par in benefit to learning with understanding; but you have the audacity to say that there is no benefit in it!!! Who should we regard to be correct!?

People say that we should plan to earn. This is absolutely correct. This is our purpose with the Qur'aan; to earn the Aakhirat, where there will be dire needs. A person will run helter-skelter just for one good deed, and then too, he will hardly get what he wants.

Friends! In these times only the *Kalaamullah* has remained with Muslims; nothing else. If you also leave this then what will remain? Treasure the words also, although the benefit is not equal to knowing the meanings.

In regard to this benefit Nabi Kareem (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said that for every letter [recited of the Qur'aan] you receive ten rewards. He furthermore said: *"I am not saying that Alif Laam Meem is one letter. In fact, Alif is one letter, Laam is one letter and Meem is one letter."*

So, by merely reciting *Alif Laam Meem* you receive thirty rewards. And according to some Ulama you receive ninety rewards. How? In this manner: the *Alif* in *Alif Laam Meem* represents three letters, namely, *Alif, Laam* and *Faa*. In lieu of each letter ten rewards are gained. Similarly, thirty rewards are for *Laam* [which is made up of *Laam, Alif and Meem*], and similarly thirty for *Meem* [which is made up of *Meem, Yaa* and another *Meem*]. Thus, the total is ninety.

> **Where will you find such a market place?**
>
> **Give a flower and you receive a bouquet!**
>
> **He takes half a life and gives back a hundred**
>
> **What never even crossed the mind He awards**

All right, leave this view aside which is not popular; take the first interpretation of thirty rewards. Now consider that you receive thirty rewards in cash. However, in the Aakhirat this will multiply to who knows how much!?

It comes in the Hadeeth Shareef that Allah Subhaanahu Wa Ta'ala nurtures *sadqah* [charity] of one date like people bring up their young animals in this world. Thus, there are people whose few actions in this world will appear in *thawaab* as big as mountains. They will say: "We didn't do so many deeds!?" The answer they will be given is: *"This is Our attribute of nurturing and careful upbringing. Once you did the action and stopped, from that time onwards We made it prosper and grow. Today you can see the results."*

Here an action is done. It grows and increases. There [in the Aakhirat] in some cases merely by wishing, there will be promotion without any action even being carried out. In this regard it comes in the Hadeeth that a person will remain in Hellfire after all and he will scream for relocation to the door of Hell. "I want to be away from the extreme heat and vehement flames here." He will be transferred to the Gate of Hellfire.

His next desire will be for his face to be turned away from Hellfire. This will also be granted. Now he will see the beautiful trees and scenery of Jannat. He will become restless and say: "Put me close to the trees. I won't go any further." This will also be granted. In short, he will be granted entry into Jannat. And he will be given a Jannat ten times the size of what he merely wished for.

So, if you receive thirty rewards [through the recitation of just three letters of the Glorious Qur'aan] and there [in the Aakhirat] there is a huge increase in multiplication what gross profit will one then receive!?

When this is the reward for reciting three letters then what is the reward for reciting the whole Qur'aan!? And what is the product of the multiplication!?

(Introduction to the wa'z, *Nida-e-Ramzaan*)

THE VALUE OF FADHAAIL AND MASAAIL

Look at the munificence of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)! He did not leave out anything of benefit to us in his *Tableegh* (propagation). Otherwise, it follows that, *Na'oothubillah*, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) evaded us and he concealed what is beneficial to us.

All these *Ahkaam* of Qurbaani, Namaaz, Roza, Haj and Zakaat seem to us presently to be insignificant and we do not value them. In other words, we do not value these *Ahkaam* as they should be valued. The reason for this is that it has come down from our forefathers. Those who have received these treasures after searching are different. It is like a hungry person will treasure even half a piece of *roti*. And if one's stomach is aching then the best of meals will not be appreciated.

The Sahaabah received answers after posing questions. After searching they found the answers, whereas we have received these for free.

In the Hadeeth is a similar case. Just as the Sahaabah treasured the answer, we should likewise appreciate it.

Nothing is more virtuous and beneficial than these topics of *thawaab* and *athaab* (reward and punishment). And in spite of being beneficial they are so easy that there is no problem in them. In fact, proof for them being beneficial is their ease. It is a law of nature that whatever is of general and abundant use and benefits, it is easily available.

Look at air. Humans and animals are in need of air more than anything else. If air is cut off for even a minute [and a person suffocates] then his life is at a peril. This air is so cheap that it requires no payment.

Then there is water. It is not so cheap, but in comparison to other things it is cheap. Then there is food. It is more expensive. And the things which are not necessary are extremely expensive, such as precious stones. If a person does not own a precious stone his entire life, there is no harm and problem in it. There are countless people who do not know what a ruby is; and what does emerald mean.

Similarly, those branches of knowledge which are beneficial and of use, they are very easy. The Sciences of the Shariah are just like that. They are extremely necessary, beneficial and of use. And on account of this the Sciences of the Shariah are very easy. There are people available everywhere to teach the Deen. This is the mystery behind the abundant teachers of the Qur'aan Shareef. And their services can be procured for a paltry sum. This is unlike other fields of study. Qualified personnel in such fields are less and their services are exorbitant.

In short, the thing to be considered is benefit; not the other makings of the topic, such as uniqueness, flowery speech, or

pleasure, subtleness, etc. Most people search for flowery speech. In this regard, they crave for a bayaan with wonderful poetry, subtle points, jokes and stories. This they like. And if *masaail* are explained in a bayaan then people run away from such a bayaan, whereas this is more beneficial. But where do they know what is of benefit to them? Allah Ta'ala says:

"Perhaps you detest something, whereas it is better for you. And perhaps you love something whereas it is bad for you."
(Surah Baqarah, 216)

It is an immense mercy of Allah Ta'ala that He has informed us of such subjects which are of use to us and that He did not teach us useless and unnecessary subjects, regardless of them being exciting. We have mentioned all this so that the topic which will be addressed now is not thought of to be worthless and insignificant.

(Extract from *Targheebul Udh'hiyyah* by Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi Rahmatullahi Alaih)

THE ESSENCE OF DU'AA

"Your Rabb says: 'Call unto Me. I will answer your call."

(Surah Mu-min, 60)

You may have understood by the Aayat that the topic of the bayaan today is to draw attention to Du'aa. Perhaps it crosses someone's mind that we do make Du'aa and we do know the importance of Du'aa then what is the need for the caution? A

caution is necessary for something which is not known or not practised?

The need to draw attention to Du'aa is that in spite of knowing and practising, when complacency is shown regarding Du'aa, i.e. its requisite etiquette and provisions are ignored then this confirms that there is a greater barrier here compared to things which are not practised upon due to lack of knowledge. In things which are not known the barrier is only ignorance which can easily be dismantled. But when there is complacency in known things then the barrier is formidable.

Although this indifference and absent-mindedness are bad in all forms of Ibaadat, but in Du'aa these are worse. The reason for this is that although the ultimate purpose of Ibaadat is the essence, but the external form is also a desired objective. But in Du'aa the desired objective is the essence which is: showing one's need, dependence, submissiveness and attention. When these are missing then there is nothing.

Consider Salaat. The pre-conditions of Salaat, such as wudhu, facing the Qiblah, the amount of Rakaats, etc., evince that apart from the inner purpose of Salaat which is turning to Allah, the external form is also the objective and desired purpose. If a person makes his Ruku', Sujood, etc., without the inner purpose, that is without his attention focused on Allah Ta'ala, a Mufti will still give Fatwa that the Salaat has been discharged. This confirms that the external form is also the objective. When the external acts of Salaat are confirmed the Fatwa will be of the Salaat having been discharged.

Take another example. In Saum (fasting) indications are that the inner purpose is to suppress the bestial desires of the nafs. Nonetheless, if a person fills his stomach at the time of Sehri and feels no hunger the entire day, in spite of the bestiality within him not diminishing, the fast will be valid by virtue of the external requisites of the fast being met.

A third example: The hidden purpose of Zakaat is to provide wealth to the poor. But it has a prescribed amount and a prescribed time. This shows that the external dimension is also an objective because merely providing wealth for the masaakeen (poor) is not dependent on these factors.

But in Du'aa, neither is time a condition, nor the Arabic language nor facing a particular direction nor a fixed amount nor conditioned with wudhu, etc. Du'aa just requires showing one's need, one's submissiveness and one's helplessness, that's all. This shows that the soul is everything here.

Now this lip-service 'du'aa' read in rote fashion without any humility, awe, nor submissiveness in one's heart is meaningless. To illustrate this inattentiveness, a person presents his appeal to the judge. How does he put forward his appeal? He has his back to the judge and faces a friend of his. He reads a line or two of his appeal and then converses and jokes with his friend. Then he reads another two lines only to engage himself with the friend again. Do you think the judge will appreciate this appeal at all? In fact this person is worthy of being punished.

In exactly the same manner understand the case of Du'aa. As long as the heart is not completely attentive and signs of submissiveness and need are not apparent, that cannot be

considered a Du'aa. Allah Ta'ala looks at the condition of the heart.

In short, it is proven fully that presence of mind and humbleness are the prime objectives of Du'aa. If a Du'aa is accepted without these then one should understand that Allah Ta'ala is favouring one; it is not the effect of the Du'aa per se.

(From *Muhimmaatud Du'aa* by Hazrat Thanwi Rahmatullahi alaih)

MAKING MUSLIMS UNDERSTAND

Presently the climate we are living through dictates that every Muslim takes it as binding upon himself to deliver the Ahkaam of Allah. Every Muslim should be preoccupied with this thought, like it was the Way of our Aslaaf (Predecessors in Islam) with Ulama, Soofiya, the influential, the prominent, the rich, the poor, the educated, the non-educated – all having being preoccupied with delivering to others whatever they knew of the Ahkaam of Islam.

The Ulama used to give lectures and admonish; the Soofiya, with their illuminated hearts and souls and through their wholesome talks, would turn the attention of the servants of Allah to Allah; traders would not be forgetful of this duty in their dealings and meetings.

The effect of this attention on a general scale was that thousands, nay millions of servants of Allah were guided to the Truth. Had this task been placed only on the shoulders of the Ulama, the Light of the Truth would not have reached those places where an *Aalim* or *Faatih* (conqueror) never set foot. Therefore, it is necessary for all Muslims in general, and those who are connected to me in particular, to become preoccupied with this task from today. Whoever has any knowledge of Islam should spread it to others, be active in executing this Islamic Duty, and anticipate the Help of Allah from the Unseen. Definitely Allah Ta'ala helps those who serve His Deen.

"If you help Allah, He will help you and plant your feet firmly."

(Surah Muhammad, 7)

Now, a programme/system is hereby laid down so that action can be taken accordingly.

1. Every person should firstly become rigid, firm and unflinching in Deen. One should not become daunted by anyone in carrying out the Ahkaam of Allah and delivering the Ahkaam to others. In Deeni matters one should not bother about consideration and relation to anyone, that one forsakes the Ahkaam of Allah, because who is greater and worthier of having love for and relation with than Allah Ta'ala?

2. Every person should bear in mind that no gathering should be without and no gathering should pass by without delivery of the Ahkaam of Allah. However, there shouldn't be any delving in intricate *masaail*. That is the work of the Ulama. If someone

refutes or responds harshly then bear and be patient. Do not respond to harshness with harshness. Even if one meets a person for some worldly purpose, or the meeting is related to business or employment then in the conversation, appropriately do pass on the Word of Haqq. In matters of the Deen a Muslim's Way should the same as the illustrious Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum) as stated by Abu Salamah Bin Abdur Rahmaan when asked how the Sahaabah were. He responded:

"In matters concerning the Deen they were like madmen."

(*Al-Adabul Mufrad* of Imam Bukhari)

3. Take out time during the day or night exclusively for delivering the *Ahkaam of Islam* to the Servants of Allah, be they Muslims or Non-Muslims, and stop them from bad actions.

4. In delivering the Ahkaam of Islam one's tone should always be gentle. One should speak cultured and dignified. However, those who are under one's control, such as the wife, children, worker, pupil, *et al*, one should admonish them at first gently and then gradually with force.

5. In delivering the *Ahkaam of Islam* bear in mind the following order:

a. Those who do not know the *Kalimah of Islam*, teach them **Laa ilaaha Illallaah Muhammadur Rasoolullah** and make them understand its meaning.

b. Those who know the *Kalimah of Islam*, tell them its meaning and tell them to compulsorily recite **Laa ilaaha Illallaah** daily a

hundred times at least, and to add **Muhammadur Rasoolullah** at intervals. It comes in the Hadeeth:

"*Refresh your Imaan with Laa ilaaha Illallaah*."

c. Emphasise to those who do not offer Salaat to be punctual with Salaat. It should be emphasised to men that they offer their Salaat with *Jamaat* in the Masjid. Those who do not know how to offer Salaat should be taught. If possible then every person who performs Salaat should be taught the translation and meanings of whatever is recited in Salaat. In other words, they should learn the translation of *Subhaanak-Allahumma* till the *Durood* and *Du'aa*. This increases concentration and absorption in the Namaaz. From time to time they should be informed of the *Masaail* of *Wudhu* and *Tahaarat*.

d. Emphasise to those upon whom Zakaat is *fardh* to discharge their Zakaat and encourage those upon whom Qurbaani is *waajib* to discharge this duty.

e. Emphasise to all Muslims to fast in the Month of Ramadhaan Shareef.

f. Emphasise to those upon whom Haj is *fardh* the performance of Haj.

g. There should necessarily be in every town *Maktabs of Ta'leem* of the Qur'aan Shareef in which together with teaching the Qur'aan, the Urdu treatises; *Behshti Zewar, Behshti Thamar, Rah-e-Najaat, etc.* should also be taught so that the children become aware of necessary *Masaail*.

h. It should be emphasised that all Muslims should live in harmony and united and that all swearing, fighting and feuding should be stopped.

i. One influential and Deeni-conscious person or a *Jamaat* of few influential and Deeni-conscious persons of the town should be made the superior. The duty of the senior/s will be to uphold unity and conformity, spread the above protocols, when any dispute arises to ascertain from the Ulama the Ruling of the Shariah and pass verdict accordingly, and to emphasise this verdict to everyone.

j. An all-out effort should be made to put a stop to lies, backbiting, jealousy, malice, enmity, bigotry, carrying tales, fornication, haraam gazes, female exposure and emergence, drinking liquor, gay behaviour, interest-bearing transactions, idleness and loafing.

k. Much emphasis should be given to speaking honestly, dealing with each other with humility and affection, remaining firm on justice and fairness, continuing permissible ways of earning livelihood, frugality and not over spending. Financial difficulties should be borne. (In other words, haraam stratagems should not be devised and haraam income should not be procured to alleviate one's lack of finance.) As far as possible do not over spend.

l. Those who are frugal in weddings and in daily expenses should not be reviled. In fact, this should be promoted. Those who employ frugality should be encouraged.

m. Don't take any permissible profession to be shameful. Give preference to even cutting grass for a livelihood over idleness and the disgrace of begging.

n. Exert yourself in good deeds and emphasise the same again and again to others.

6. The kitaabs *Hayaatul Muslimeen*, *Tableegh-e-Deen, Ta'leemud Deen, Mahaasinul Islam* and *Behshti Zewar* should be in one's course of study. From time to time the lessons should be conveyed to one's friends, connections and all servants of Allah.

7. Ulama who are occupied with teaching, writing, etc. should not be lax in delivering the Divine Ahkaam to the servants of Allah when meeting people and associating. In their leisure times, such as on the Jumu'ah break and during lengthy vacation periods, they should take it as a duty upon themselves to deliver the Ahkaam of Islam to the servants of Allah.

I reiterate with emphasis, especially to those who have a special relationship with me that the above protocols should be rigidly adhered to. Never be complacent in them. I also request from all the Adherents of Islam that they implement this programme and make it part and parcel of their lives. Everyone should be ready and prepared to serve the Deen of Allah.

I have conviction and trust in Allah that if all Muslims get down to work in this manner all misfortunes and disturbances which are currently plaguing Muslims will disappear rapidly and the *Nusrat* (Help) of Allah will be at hand.

This programme should not be carried out just for a few days; it should be carried out and sustained forever.

I now conclude this message with the following Du'aa:

"O Allah! Grant forgiveness to us for our sins and our excesses in our matters. Make us firm on our feet and help us against the kuffaar."

(Imdaadul Fataawa, V.4 P.635-638)